CONCEPT AND REALITY

in Early Buddhist Thought

Bhikkhu Ñāṇananda

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About the Author

Bhikkhu Ñāṇananda is a Buddhist monk of Sri Lanka. Before his ordination he was an assistant lecturer in Pali at the University of Peradeniya. After entering the Buddhist Order in 1969 he has resided mostly in remote hermitages. His other publications by BPS are :

The Magic Of The Mind

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CONCEPT AND REALITY

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An Essay on Papañca and
Papañca-Sañña-Sankhā

BHIKKHU ÑĀṆANANDA

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PREFACE

The analysis of the nature of concepts constitutes an important facet of the Buddhist doctrine of *Anattā* ('not-self'). Buddhism traces the idea of a soul to a fundamental error in understanding the facts of experience. This ignorance (*avijjā*) is reflected to a great extent in the words and concepts in worldly parlance. Being unaware of their limitations, man is generally prone to cling to them dogmatically and this accounts for a good deal of complications in his intellectual and emotional life. Hence an understanding of the nature of concepts as such is a preliminary step in the spiritual endeavour in Buddhism. The Buddha's teachings on this particular aspect of our phenomenal existence can best be appreciated with the aid of the two key-words, '*papañca*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*', an evaluation of which is the aim of this work.

'*Papañca*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*' comprehend between them a picture of the concept in its dynamic and static aspects, linking up the psycho-ethical foundations of conceptualisation with the symbolical superstructure of language and logic. The imperfections inherent in the subjective aspect of the concept are thereby causally related to the frailities that characterise its objective aspect. Thus in its analysis of the concept, Buddhism does not stop at the linguistic or logical level, but delves deeper into its psychological mainsprings. This affords us an opportunity to reassess some of the basic tenets of Buddhism in the light of '*papañca*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*,' which we have here utilised accordingly.

It so happens that '*papañca*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*' are two controversial terms in Buddhist philosophy. The commentarial tradition and modern scholarship have given us a number of interpretations which are more often contradictory than complementary. We have attempted a reappraisal of the whole problem and the resulting conclusions were not always in harmony with the traditional or other accepted interpretations. Hence the reader is invited to exercise caution and to judge for himself.

It is feared that the novelty of some of our interpretations will draw two types of extreme reaction. On the one hand, it might give rise to a total antipathy towards the critical analysis of doctrinal points as attempted here. One the other, it might engender an unreasonable distrust leading to a sweeping condemnation of the commentaries as a whole. This work has failed in its purpose if its critical scrutiny of the occasional shortcomings in the commentarial literature makes anyone forget his indebtedness to the commentaries for his knowledge of the Dhamma.

The original essay forming the nucleus of the present work was written some years ago while I was teaching at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya. When I entered the Order it was yet unpublished, and it would have even continued to remain so had it not been for the initative taken by the venerable Nyānapoṇika Mahāthera. While the manuscript was being prepared for publication, the scope of the essay was considerably widened, enabling it to absorb a good deal of fresh material. So it grew to its present size, in which form the work is here presented as a humble tribute to all my teachers.

Bhikkhu Ñāṇananda

Island Hermitage,
Dodanduwa, Sri Lanka
July, 1969.

TYPOGRAPHICAL — As some diacritics were not available, the transliteration of the palatal sibilant could not be regularised. In a few instances, however, 'sh' has been used instead.

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PAPAÑCA AND PAPAÑCA-SAÑÑĀ-SAṄKHĀ

Papañca—a key-word in the Sutta terminology.

The term '*papañca*,' as it occurs in the Pāli Canon, has presented considerable difficulty of interpretation. Attempts at its definition by the commentators as well as by the present-day scholars, have given rise to divergent conclusions. It is, however, generally agreed that the determination of its significance is fundamental to a proper understanding of the philosophy of early Buddhism.

In Canonical passages the term appears in a variety of forms and associations, sometimes as a verb or a verbal-derivative (*papañceti, papañcayantā, papañcita*) and sometimes as part of a compound (*papañca-saññā, papañca-saṅkhā papañca-saññā-saṅkhā, papañca-saññā-saṅkhā-samudācaraṇa-paññatti, papañca-saṅkhā-pahāna, papañca-vūpasama, papañca-nirodha, chinnapapañca, papañcārāma. papañcarati*). Its antonym too, is seen to occur, even beside it in certain contexts (*nippapañca, nippapañca-pada, nippapañcapatha, nippapañcārāma, nippapañcarati, appapañcaṁ*). This variety of usage, on the one hand, greatly facilitates our quest for a definition, while on the other, it imposes an exacting test of validity for whatever definition we venture to offer.

If we collate the different contexts in which some reference to '*papañca*' has been made, one of our first impressions would be the prominence it enjoys in a good number of them. When a list of terms relating to a common topic is set out in the *suttas*, one often finds that the most important among them is either placed first, or else, is counted last. Now, the term '*papañca*' is in fact enumerated last in as many as seven such contexts.[1]

If the logic of arrangement alone is deemed insufficient, a deeper analysis of the contexts themselves will provide abundant

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[1] *Sakkapañha Sutta* (D. N. II 266ff), *Madhupiṇḍika* S. (M.N.I 109ff), *Cūlasīhanāda*. S. (M.N.I 65ff), *Kalahavivāda* S, (Sn. 168ff) A. N. III 293, A. N. IV. 229, Ud. 77.

proof of the fundamental significance of '*papañca*'. The *Sakkapañha* (D. N.), *Madhupiṇḍika* (M. N.) and *Kalahavivāda* (Sn.) *Suttas*, for instance, trace the manifold conflict both in the individual as well as in the society, to the question of '*papañca*.' It is also significant that at A. N. IV 229, the Buddha himself adds the eighth '*Mahāpurisavitakka*' ('thought of a great man') to Anuruddha's seven, and it concerns '*papañca*.'

"Well done! Well done, Anuruddha! Well have you pondered over the seven thoughts of a great man! That is to say: 'This dhamma is for one who wants little, not for one who wants much; for the contented, not for the discontented; for the secluded, not for one who is fond of society; for the energetic, not for the lazy; for one who has set up mindfulness, not for the laggard therein; for the composed, not for the flustered; for the wise, not for the unwise. But, Anuruddha, do you also ponder over this eighth thought of a great man, to wit: "This dhamma is for one who likes and delights in '*nippapañca*,' not for one who likes and delights in '*papañca*'[1] *(nippapañcārāmassāyaṁ dhammo nippapañcaratino nāyaṁ dhammo papañcārāmassa papañcaratino*)."

G. S., IV 155.

The above series of eight '*Mahāpurisavitakkas*' seem to follow an ascending order in point of importance. This fact, coupled with the reference to '*papañca*' in the concluding stanzas of the *sutta*, provides a sure index to the high degree of importance attached to this particular term. Hence the nature of its significance must now be determined.

Papañca and Sense-Perception.

The contexts in which the term is located, are on the whole psychological in their import. The *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta* (M. N. 109 ff) points to the fact that '*papañca*' is essentially connected with the process of sense-perception, and so also does the

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[1] As a tentative measure, we leave the word untranslated. Though we will be depending on the P. T. S. translations to a great extent, we might not be able to cite them verbatim always. However, in spite of alterations, references to standard translations will be given for the reader's convenience.

Kalahavivāda Sutta (Sn. v. 874) when it emphatically states that '*papañca-saṅkha*' have their origin in sense-perception (*Saññā-nidānā hi papañca-saṅkha*). The following formula of sense-perception occurring in the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*, may however be regarded as the '*locus classicus*' as it affords us a clearer insight into the problem of '*papañca*.'

Cakkhuñcāvuso paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṁ, tiṇṇaṁ saṅgati phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, yaṁ vedeti taṁ sañjānāti, yaṁ sañjanāti taṁ vitakketi, yaṁ vitakketi, taṁ papañceti, yaṁ papañceti tatonidānaṁ purisaṁ papañcasaññā-saṅkhā samudācaranti atītānāgata-paccuppannesu cakkhu-viññeyyesu rūpesu. Sotañcāvuso paṭicca sadde ca...... ghānañ-cāvuso paṭicca gandhe ca...... jivhañcāvuso paṭicca rase ca...... kāyañcāvuso paṭicca phoṭṭhabbe ca...... manañcāvuso paṭicca dhamme ca ..... manoviññeyyesu dhammesu.

(M. N I 111 ff)

"Visual consciousness, brethren, arises because of eye and material shapes; the meeting of the three is sensory impingement; because of sensory impingement arises feeling; what one feels one perceives; what one perceives, one reasons about; what one reasons about, one turns into '*papañca*' (*papañceti*); what one turns into '*papañca*', due to that '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*' assail him in regard to material shapes cognisable by the eye belonging to the past, the future and the present. And, brethren, auditory consciousness arises because of ear and sounds...... olfactory consciousness arises because of nose and smell ..... gustatory consciousness arises because of tongue and tastes...... bodily consciousness arises because of body and touches...... mental consciousness arises because of mind and mental objects...... belonging to the past, the future and the present."

(M. L. S. I 145)

This passage indicates that '*papañca*' signifies the final stage in the process of sense-cognition. The term definitely concerns the grosser conceptual aspect of the process, since it is a

consequent to '*vitakka*' (reasoning) which presupposes language.[1] Hence we should determine how '*papañca*' differs from — nay, marks a development on — '*vitakka*'. The etymology of the word would help us at this point. Being derived from '*pra* + √ *pañc*' it conveys such meanings as 'spreading out,' 'expansion,' 'diffusness' and 'manifoldness.' The tendency towards proliferation in the realm of concepts may be described in any one of those terms, and this is probably the primary meaning of '*papañca.*'[2]

Thus, while '*vitakka*' denotes the onset or initial application of thought, '*papañca*' may refer to the consequent prolificity in ideation. One might object, however, that the word '*vicāra,*' so often found in the suttas, would have amply conveyed this meaning.[3] It is therefore necessary to distinguish between '*vicāra*' and '*papañca*' as well. '*Vicāra,*' though it denotes the discursive aspect of the intellect, has the finer sense of investigation and deliberation. It follows faithfully in the wake of '*vitakka*' and seeks to sustain it. Hence it is that '*vicāra*' hardly occurs by itself and is often found juxtaposed with *vitakka*,' as '*vitakka-vicāra.*' '*Papañca*' on the other hand, is a more comprehensive term hinting at the tendency of the worlding's imagination to break loose and run riot. If '*vicāra,*' at least

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1 "*Pubbe kho āvuso Visākha vitakketvā vicāretvā pacchā vācaṃ bhindati, tasmā vitakkavicārā vacīsaṅkhārā.*" *Culla Vedalla* S., M. N, I 301. "Having first had initial thought and discursive thought, one subsequently utters a speech; therefore initial and discursive thought is activity of speech." M. L. S. I. 363.

2 Cf. (I '*Vipañcitaññū*' *at* A. N. II 135.
(II) *Katamo ca puggalo vipañcitaññū? Yassa puggalassa saṅkhittena bhāsitassa vitthārena atthe vibhajiyamāne dhammābhisamayo hoti. Ayaṁ vuccati puggalo vipañcitaññū*'. *Pug P*, 41.

"What sort of person learns by exposition? The person to whom comprehension of the doctrine comes when the meaning of what is briefly uttered is analysed in detail."
(III) *Vipañcayati, vipañcanā, vipañcitaññū — Netti.* 9.

3 For a detailed definition of *vitakka* and *vicāra,* see *Paṭhavīkasiṇa Niddesa,* Vism. I 142-3.

relatively, denotes cosmos in the mental realm, '*papañca*' seems to signify chaos. This of course does not preclude the possibility that what often passes for '*vicāra*' might turn out to be '*papañca*' when viewed from a higher stand-point. In any case, the 'expansion' or 'diffusion' of thought as envisaged by '*papañca*' is one that tends to obscure the true state of affairs inasmuch as it is an unwarranted deviation giving rise to obsession. This particular nuance in the meaning of the term becomes obvious when '*papañca*' is used to denote verbosity or circumlocution. In fact it is probably this latter sense found in common usage, that has assumed a philosophical dimension with its transference from the verbal to the mental sphere. As we have already mentioned, conceptual activity presupposes language, so much so that thought itself may be regarded as a form of sub-vocal speech. The above transference, therefore, is quite appropriate. This tentative definition of '*papañca*' provides the key to the other intriguing term '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*.' In view of the close relationship between '*papañca*' and the linguistic medium, it appears that, '*saṅkhā*' (*saṃ* + √*khyā*-'to call') may be rendered by such terms as concept, reckoning, designation or linguistic convention.[1] Hence '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*' can mean concepts, reckonings, designations or linguistic conventions characterised by the prolific conceptualising tendency of the mind.

Equipped with these definitions we may now examine the *Madhupiṇḍika*-formula of sense perception, in detail. It begins on an impersonal note reminiscent of the fact of Dependent Arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*).

(I) "*Cakkhuñcāvuso paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkuviññāṇaṁ tiṇṇaṁ saṅgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā......*"

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[1] '*Yaṁ hi bhikkhave rūpaṁ atītaṁ niruddhaṁ viparinctaṁ ahosīti tassa saṅkhā, ahosīti tassa samaññā, ahosīti tassa paññatti ...*'

S. N, III 71.

"Whatever material form, O monks, that is past, has ceased, has undergone change, its reckoning its appellation, its designastion is: 'has been'........"

"Because of eye and material objects, O brethren, arises visual consciousness; the meeting of the three is sensory impingement, because of sensory impingement arises feeling . ... . "

The impersonal note is sustained only up to the point of '*vedanā*.' The formula now takes a personal ending suggestive of deliberate activity.

(II) "*Yaṁ vedeti taṁ sañjānāti, yaṁ sañjānāti, taṁ vitakketi yaṁ vitakketi taṁ papañceti* ... ' "What one feels, one perceives; what one perceives, one reasons about; what one reasons about, one proliferates conceptually......"

The deliberate activity implied by the third person verb is seen to stop at '*papañceti*.' Now comes the most interesting stage of the process of cognition. *Apparently* it is no longer a mere contingent process, nor is it an activity deliberately directed, *but an inexorable subjection to an objective order of things*. At this final stage of sense-perception, he who has hitherto been the subject now becomes the hapless objects.

(III)...... "*Yaṁ papañceti tatonidānaṁ purisaṁ papañcasaññā saṅkhā samudācaranti atītānāgatapaccuppannesu cakkhuviññeyyesu rūpesu* ....."

......"What one proliferates conceptually, due to that, concepts characterised by the prolific tendency assail him in regard to material shapes cognisable by the eye, belonging to the past, the future and the present... .."

Like the legendary resurrected tiger which devoured the magician who restored it to life out of its skeletal bones, the concepts and linguistic conventions overwhelm the worlding who evolved them.[1] At the final and crucial stage of sense-perception, the concepts are, as it were, invested with an objective character. This phenomenon is brought about mainly by certain peculiarities inherent in the linguistic medium. As a symbolical

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[1] A somewhat humorous anecdote suggestive of the vicious character of "*papañcasaññāsaṅkha*' occurs in the *Bhāgineyyasaṃgharakkhitattheravatthu* of the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*.

medium, language has an essential public quality about it. This public quality has necessitated the standardisation of the symbols (words) as well as of the patterns of their arrangement (grammar and logic), and these, therefore enjoy a certain degree of stability. Thus the letter, as the smallest unit of language, was called an *'akṣara'* ('stable', 'durable') and language itself was associated with God and eternity by the ancient Indian philosophers. Now, the vague percepts, which are already tainted with a notion of stability owing to the limitations of the sensory apparatus, become fully crystallized into concepts in the realm of ideation. Nouns, abstract nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs — in short, the whole repertoire of language, assumes a certain substantial character by virtue of its relative stability. It is probably this particular phenomenon that is hinted at, by such oft-recurring phrases in the suttas as*......thāmasā parāmassa abhinivissa voharanti* ('......having seized tenaciously and adhering thereto, they declare......') and *'takkapariyāhata'* ('hammered out on the anvil of logic, as it were') cited in connection with dogmatic therories, which themselves are called *'diṭṭhijāla'* ('veritable networks of views'). The vicious proliferating tendency of the worldling's consciousness weaves for him a labyrinthine network of concepts connecting the three periods of time through processes of recognition, retrospection and speculation. The tangled maze with its apparent objectivity entices the worldling and ultimately obsesses and overwhelms him. The Buddha has compared the aggregate of consciousness to a conjuror's trick or an illusion (*māyā*')[1] and we may connect it with the above-mentioned image of the resurrected tiger.

It must be confessed at this stage that our interpretation of the *Madhupiṇḍika* formula of sense-perception differs to some extent

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[1] *Pheṇapiṇḍūpamaṁ rūpaṁ - vedanā bubbulūpamā*
Marīcikūpamā saññā - saṃkhārā kadalūpamā
Māyūpamañca viññāṇaṁ - dīpitādiccabandhunā

S. N. III 142

" 'The Kinsman of the Sun' (the Buddha) has compared corporeality to a mass of foam, feelings to a bubble, perceptions to a mirage, volitional-activities to a plantain-tree, and conscious ness to an illusion."

from that advanced by Buddhaghosa. Besides rendering, '*papañcasaññā-saṅkhā*' as '*papañca-koṭṭhāsā*' ('parts of *papañca*') thereby ignoring its essential cennection with language, Buddhaghosa pays little attention to the peculiar syntactical arrangement of the formula.[1] This latter peculiarity will be obvious when one compares the above formula with another occurring in the *Nidāna Saṃyutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*.

'*Cakkhuñcāvuso paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṁ tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso phassapaccayā vedanā vedanāpaccayā taṇhā taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṁ upādāna paccayā bhavo bhava-*

[1] '*Cakkhuñcāvusoti ādisu ayamattho: Āvuso nissayabhāvena cakkhuppasādañca ārammaṇabhāvena catusamuṭṭhānikarūpe capaṭicca cakkhuviññāṇaṁ nāma uppajjati. Tiṇṇaṁ saṅgati phasso ti tesaṁ tiṇṇaṁ saṅgatiyā phasso nāma uppajjati, taṁ phassaṁ paṭicca sahajātādivasena phassapaccayā vedanā upajjati; tāya vedanāya yaṁ ārammaṇaṁ vedeti tadeva saññā sañjānāti; yaṁ saññā sañjānāti, tadeva ārammaṇaṁ vitakko vitakketi, yaṁ vitakko vitakketi tadevārammaṇaṁ papañco papañceti. Tato nidānanti etehi cakkhurūpadīhi kāraṇehi. purisaṁ papañcasaññāsaṅkhā samudācarantīti taṁ apariññātakāraṇaṁ purisaṁ papañcakoṭṭhāsā abhibhavanti tassa pavattantīti attho.*' M. A. II 75

"This is the meaning of the passage beginning with '*cakkhuñcāvuso*': 'Brethren, because of the sensitive surface of the eye as the support and the four originating material elements as the object, there arises 'eye-consciousness.' '*Tiṇṇaṁ saṅgati phasso*': by the meeting of those three arises 'contact.' Because of that contact arises feeling, with contact as its condition by way of co-nascence etc. Whatever object is felt by that feeling, that, '*perception*' *perceives*; whatever perception perceives, '*reasoning*' *reasons about* that very object; whatever reasoning reasons about, '*papañca*' *transforms into papañca* that very object. '*Tatonidānaṁ*: with these factors such as the eye and visible object. '*Purisaṁ papañcasaññāsaṅkhā samudācarantīti*': *Parts* of *papañca* overwhelm that man who is ignorant of those facts; that is, they exist for him."

paccayā jati, jātipaccyā jarāmaraṇaṁ sokaparidevadukkha-domanssupāyāsā sambhavanti. Ayaṁ lokassa samudayo'.

S. N. II 73.

'Because of eye and material objects, brethren, arises visual consciousness; the meeting of the three is sensory impingement, because of sensory impingement arises feeling; because of feeling, craving; because of craving, grasping; because of grasping, becoming; because of becoming birth; and because of birth, decay and death, grief, lamentation, suffering and despair arise. This is the arising of the world.'

In this case the formula of perception is seen to branch off towards the stereotyped formula of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* ('Dependent Arising'). The aim here is to illustrate the fact of 'Dependent Arising.' The *Madhupiṇḍika* formula, on the other hand, has a different purpose, and this we may ascertain from a study of the context. It must be noted that the formula in question is in effect a commentary by *Mahākaccāna* on the following brief discourse by the Buddha.

'Yatonidānaṁ bhikkhu purisaṁ papañcasaññāsaṅkhā samudā-caranti, ettha ce natthi abhinanditabbaṁ abhivaditabbaṁ ajjhosetabbaṁ esevanto rāgānusayānaṁ esevanto paṭighānusa-yānaṁ esevanto diṭṭhānusayānaṁ, esevanto vicikicchānusayānaṁ, esevanto mānānusayānaṃ, esevanto bhavarāgānusayānaṃ esevan-to avijjānusayānaṁ esevanto daṇḍādāna - satthādāna - kalaha - viggaha - vivāda - tuvantuva - pesuñña - musāvādānaṁ, etthete pāpakā akusalā dhammā aparisesā nirujjhanti.

— M. N. I 109

'If O monk, one neither delights in nor asserts, nor clings to, that which makes one subject to 'concepts characterised by the prolific tendency,' then that itself is the end of the proclivities to attachment, views, pride, ignorance and attachment to becoming. That itself is the end of taking the stick, of taking the weapon, of quarreling, contending, disputing, accusation, slander and lying speech. Here it is that all these evil unskilled states cease without residue.'

On being requested by the monks who were perplexed by this brief discourse, *Mahākaccāna* gives a detailed commentary, and

in doing so he pays particular attention to the word '*yatonidānaṃ*' ('owing to which'). Hence the concluding portion of the formula of sense-perception begins with its correlative '*tatonidānaṃ*' (owing to that'). The formula, therefore, is part of an attempt to illustrate how (lit. 'on account of what') these '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*' manage to overwhelm the worldling. Thus our inferences based on the syntax of the formula are not without justification. Indeed, we may add in passing, that this *sutta* which has been so aptly titled as '*Madhupiṇḍika*' ('Honey-ball') by the Buddha himself, owing to its immense richness of meaning, has not yet exhausted its flavour at the hands of the commentators.[1]

Triple Proliferation in Thought

In order to locate the deeper psychological mainsprings of '*papañca*' we have to turn our attention to the Buddha's brief discourse set out above. There it is said that if one does not delight in or assert or cling to that which entails subjection to '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*' one would be released from all proclivities towards evil mental states. As we have already indicated, '*yatonidānaṁ*' invariably refers to the first part of the formula of sense-perception bounded by its correlative '*tatonidānaṃ*.' What one should neither delight in nor assert nor cling to, is this very process of sense perception, which comprehends from the cognitive point of view the totality of the five aggregates

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[1] This said, venerable Ānanda addressed the Exalted One thus: "Lord, as a man overcome by hunger and exhaustion might come upon a honey ball; from each bit that he would taste, he would get a sweet delicious flavour which remains unimpaired — even so, Lord, is a monk who is naturally able in mind from each bit that he would examine with intuitive wisdom as to the meaning of this disquisition on Dhamma, he would get delight, he would get satisfaction for the mind. What is this disquisition on Dhamma called, Lord?"

"Wherefore you, Ānanda, may understand this disquisition on Dhamma as the 'Disquisition of the Honey-ball'."

— M. L. S. 147 - 8.

themselves.[1] The expressions, 'delighted in,' 'asserting' and 'clinging to' correspond respectively to *taṇhā* (craving), *māna* (conceit) and *diṭṭhi* (views), bound up with the notions of 'I' and 'mine.' This marks the intrusion of the ego into the field of sense perception. In fact, from the worldling's point of view, it is no intrusion at all, for the subject-object relationship is regarded by him as of the very essence of cognition. As portrayed by *Mahākaccāna's* formula, the latent illusion of the ego awakens at the stage of '*vedanā*' and thereafter the vicious duality is maintained until it is fully crystallized and justified at the conceptual level. Thus what has been a complex, conditionally arisen process, tends to be resolved into a direct relationship between the ego and the non-ego. Now this is an oversimplification of facts characteristic of the realm of language as well as of our ways of thought. The label 'I' thus superimposed on the complex contingent process, serves as a convenient fiction of thought or a short-hand device, and is in fact one of the shortest words in many a language. But paradoxically enough, it is the outcome of '*papañca*' — rather a disconcerting predicament. The paradox is resolved by the fact that the ego notion is an **extension in thought** not faithful to facts, being a mental aberration of the worldling. Here we see a curious distinction between the relative meanings attached to '*papañca*' when it is used with reference to the verbal and the mental realms respectively. Such short-hand devices as technical terms or codewords in a language help us to avoid '*verbal-papañca*,' but inasmuch as they are evolved through a complex process of thought activity they may be said to presuppose a good deal of 'mental - *papañca*.'

Given the ego-consciousness, the ever-prolific process of conceptualisation in all its complex ramifications, sets in. From one aspect, the notion 'I' with its concomitant notions of 'my' and

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[1] Buddhaghosa, however, concludes that it is the twelve spheres of sense that one should neither delight in, nor assert nor cling to. ('*Ettha ce natthi abhinanditabbanti yasmiṃ dvādasāyatane kārane sati ....*' M. A. II 75) This is because he has interpreted '*tatonidānaṃ*' to mean only the sense organs and their corresponding objects, by laying excessive emphasis on the word '*paṭicca*' in the formula.

mine,' develops towards craving (*taṇhā*). Viewed from another aspect, as inevitably and inextricably bound up with the notions of 'not-I,' of '*thou*' and '*thine*,' it is a form of measuring or value-judgment (*māna*). Yet another aspect is the dogmatic adherence to the concept of an ego as a theoretical formulation. Thus Craving, Conceit and Views (*taṇhā, māna, diṭṭhi*) are but three aspects of the self-same ego-consciousness, and we find these alluded to in the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta* by the expressions, '*abhinanditabbaṁ*,' '*abhivaditabbaṁ*,' and '*ajjhosetabbaṁ*,' respectively. It is this triune nature of the ego that one often comes across in the Pali Canon '*mamatta*,' '*asmimāna*' and '*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*.' Of similar significance are the three standpoints from which the worldling is said to view each of his Five Aggregates when he thinks of them as 'This is mine' ('*etaṁ mama*'), 'This am I' ('*eso'hamasmi*'), 'This is my self' ('*eso me atta*'). When we take into account the fact that the process of sense-perception as given in the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta* comprehends the Five Aggregates, the parallelism becomes all the more obvious. Since in Buddhist psychology 'a difference of aspects is a difference in things,' the three terms Craving, Conceit and Views are usually distinguished between. Yet as they arise from the self-same matrix of the super-imposed ego, they are not to be considered mutually exclusive. Now the prolificity in concepts suggested by the term '*papañca*' manifests itself through the above three main channels, so much so that the term has been traditionally associated with them. In the *Mahāniddesa*, (pg. 334) for instance, *taṇhā*, *māna* and *diṭṭhi* are all defined in terms of '*papañca*.'

Papañcā yeva papañcasaṅkhā taṇhāpapañcasaṅkhā diṭṭhi-papañcasaṅkhā, mānapapañcasaṅkhā.

Papañcas themselves are '*papañca-saṅkhās*,' to wit: *taṅhā-papañca-saṅkhā, diṭṭhi-papañca-saṅkhā, māna-papañca saṅkhā.*

Buddhaghosa also often gives a similar definition. At D. A. II 721 he observes:—

Papañcasaññāsaṅkhāti tayo papañcā-taṇhā papañco, mānapapañco, diṭṭhi papañcoti.

Papañcasaññāsankhā refer to the three *papañcas*, *taṇhā papañca*, *māna papañca* and *diṭṭhi papañca*.

At M. A. II 10 we read:

......*taṇhādiṭṭhimānānaṁ etaṁ adhivacanaṁ*

'This is a synonym for *taṇhā*, *diṭṭhi* and *māna*.'

And at A. A. III 151:—

......*taṇhādiṭṭhimānappabhedassa papañcassa gati.*

'The range of *papañca* comprising its three types. *taṇhā*, *diṭṭhi* and *māna*.

The last reference in particular, reminds us of the fact that Craving, Conceit and Views (*taṇhā*, *māna*, *diṭṭhi*) are so many instances of *papañca*. These are therefore 'definitions in extension,' seeking to define '*papañca*' by giving its most notable instances. Thus it seems that the commentarial tradition has rightly recognised the question of aspects referred to above. It has been suggested by E. R. Sarathchandra[1] that *taṇhā* is rather the result of '*papañca*' than '*papañca*' itself. However, as we have shown above, not only *taṇhā*, but *māna* and *diṭṭhi* also are illustrative of '*papañca*' thus disallowing any distinction as to priority Nevertheless '*papañca*' can be regarded as something fundamental to *taṇhā*, *māna* and *diṭṭhi*—something that both underlies and comprehends each of them.

The essence of the Buddha's discourse to the monks in the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta* may now be summed up. If one does not entertain Craving, Conceit and Views (*taṇhā*, *māna*, *diṭṭhi*) with regard to the conditioned phenomena involved in the process of cognition, by resorting to the fiction of an ego, one is free from the yoke of proliferating concepts and has thereby eradicated the proclivities to all evil mental states which breed conflict both in the individual and in society. As a description of the goal of spiritual endeavour in Buddhism, this affords us an insight into what Buddhism stands for. It is noteworthy in this connection, that the true *raison d'etre* of the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta* is the question put to the Buddha by *Daṇḍapāṇi* the *Sākyan*: "*Kiṃvādī samano kim akkhāyī*?" ("What is the doctrine of the recluse, what does he proclaim?") The Buddha's reply runs thus:— "*Yathāvādī kho āvuso sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake*

[1] 'Buddhist Psychology of Perception' – p. 5

sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiyā pajāya sadevamanussāya na kena ci loke viggayha tiṭṭhati, yathā ca pana kāmehi visaṁyuttaṁ viharantaṁ taṁ brāhmaṇaṁ akathaṁkathiṁ chinnakukkuccaṁ bhavābhave vītataṇhaṁ saññā nānusenti, evaṃvādī kho ahaṃ āvuso evamakkhāyī"

— M. N. I 108.

"According to whatever doctrine, O brother, there is no contending with anyone in this world — with its gods, *Māras* and *Brahmas*, with the progeny of the world comprising recluses and brahmins, gods and men - and also due to which, perceptions no longer persist as latent proclivities in the mind of that brahmin[1] even as he lives detached from sense-pleasures, without questionings, remorse cut off, and devoid of craving for reiterated existence — such is my doctrine, O brother, thus do I proclaim (it)."

Two prominent features of the Buddha's 'theory' are revealed by this reply. Firstly, his 'theory' is of such a kind that it does not entangle him in disputes and conflicts with anyone. Secondly, the biases and proclivities that normally underlie sense-perceptions, are extinct in him, freed as he is from bondage to sense desires, from doubt, remorse and craving. These two features are unique for his 'theory,' since their opposites are generally true of dogmatic theories in the world. The Buddha's brief discourse to the monks, which we have analysed above, is merely the subsequent elucidation of his reply to *Daṇḍapāṇi* and *Mahākaccāna's* formula of sense perception — the *locus classicus* for our inquiry into *papañca* — is but a further commentary on that discourse. Hence we see that the question of *papañca* lies at the core of the Buddha's reply to *Daṇḍapāṇi*. All this is suggestive of the immense significance of the term in the psychological, ethical and philosophical spheres of the teachings of Buddhism.

From the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*, let us now pass on to other suttas which throw more light on the subject of our inquiry.

Bondage of Concepts

The *Vepacitti Sutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (IV 202ff) brings into clear relief the vicious proliferating tendency in ideation

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[1] The word here refers to the arahant.

implied by '*papañca*' as well as the enslavement it entails. The parable of *Vepacitti Asurinda* ('king of Demons') related by the Buddha as a preamble to his sermon proper, is particularly significant in this respect. It concerns the mythical battle between gods and demons, and describes how the victorious gods bring *Vepacitti*, bound neck, hand and foot, to the presence of *Sakka*, the lord of gods. The five-fold bondage of *Vepacitti* has a peculiar mechanism about it. When *Vepacitti* thinks that the gods are righteous and the demons are unrighteous and desires to remain in the *deva*-world, he straightway beholds himself free from the bondage and possessed of the five pleasure of the senses. But as soon as he thinks that the demons are righteous and the gods are unrighteous, and wishes to go back to the *Asura*-world, he finds himself bound with that five-fold bondage, divested of the five sensual pleasures. This fantastically subtle bondage is dependent on the very thoughts of the prisoner. Having cited this parable, the Buddha now effects the transition from mythology to psychology and philosophy.

"..........Evaṃ sukhumaṃ kho bhikkhave Vepacittibandhanaṁ, tato sukhumataraṁ Mārabandhanaṁ Maññamāno kho bhikkhave baddho Mārassa, amaññamāno mutto pāpimato. 'Asmīti' bhikkhave maññitametaṃ 'Ayam ahaṃ asmīti' maññitametaṁ, 'Bhavissanti' maññitametaṃ, 'Na bhavissanti' maññitametaṁ, 'Rūpī bhavissanti' maññitametaṁ, 'Arūpī bhavissanti' maññitametaṁ, 'Saññībhavissanti, maññitametaṁ, 'Asaññī bhavissanti' maññitametaṁ, 'Nevasaññīnāsaññī bhavissanti' maññitametaṁ. Maññitaṁ bhikkhave rogo, maññitaṃgaṇḍo, maññitaṁ sallaṁ. Tasmātiha bhikkhave amaññitamānena cetasā viharissāmāti. Evañhi vo bhikkhave sikkhitabbaṁ.

'Asmīti' bhikkave iñjitametaṁ, ayam aham asmīti .... nevasaññī nāsaññī bhavissanti.........Tasmātiha bhikkhave aniñjamānena cetasā viharissāmāti. Evañhi vo bhikkave sikkhitabbaṁ.

'Asmīti' bhikkhave phanditametaṁ...... Tasmātiha bhikkhave aphandamānena cetasā viharissāmātī. Evañhi vo bhikkhave sikkhitabbaṁ.

'Asmīti' bhikkhave papañcitametaṁ...... Tasmātiha bhikkhave nippapañcena cetasā viharissāmāti. Evañhi vo bhikkhave sikkhitabbaṁ.

Asmīti bhikkhave mānagatametaṃ.........Tasmātiha bhikkhave nihatamānena cetasā viharissāmāti. Evañhi vo bhikkhave sikkhitabbanti.

".........So subtle, brethren, is the bondage of *Vepacitti*, but more subtle still the bondage of *Māra*. He who imagines, brethren, is bound by *Māra*: he who does not imagine, is freed from the Evil One. 'I am' — this is an imagining. 'This am I' — that is an imagining. 'I shall be' — that is an imagining. 'I shall not be'...... 'Embodied shall I be' ...... 'Formless shall I be' ...... 'I shall be conscious' ..... 'unconscious shall I be' ...... 'Neither conscious nor Uunconscious shall I be' ...... The imagining, brethren, is a disease, imagining is an abscess, a barb. Wherefore, brethren ye must say: "With mind free from imaginings will we abide." Thus must ye train yourselves.

'I am', brethren, is an agitation. 'This am I' .... these, brethren, are agitations...... Wherefore, brethren, ye must say: "With mind free from agitation will we abide." Thus must ye train yourselves.

'I am,' brethren, is a palpitation. 'This am I' .... these, brethren, are palpitations, ... Wherefore, brethren, ye must say: "With mind free from palpitations will we abide." Thus must ye train yourselves.

'I am,' brethren, is a conceptual proliferation. 'This am I'...... these, brethren, are proliferations. Wherefore, brethren, ye must say: "With mind free from proliferations will we abide." Thus must ye train yourselves.

'I am,' brethren, is a conceit. 'This am I' ...... These, brethren, are conceits. Wherefore, brethren, ye must say: "With mind free from conceits will we abide.' Thus must ye train yourselves".

K. S. IV 133 — 4

It will be seen that each of the nine prepositions given above is qualified by five adjectives: *maññitaṁ*, *iñjitaṁ* '*phanditam*,' *papañcitaṁ*' and '*mānagataṁ*.'[1] These latter may be examined

[1] *Vibhaṅga* (p. 390-1) lists these nine items and qualifies them with the words *iñjita*, *phandita*, *papañcita* and *saṅkhata*.

in the light of what we have already stated regarding the question of *'aspects'* in Buddhist psychology. *'Maññita'* (√*man* – to think) points to the thought activity or imagination which gives rise to those propositions. *'Iñjita'* (√*'iñj* – 'to move') reminiscent of the term *'ejā'* which is a synonym for *'taṇhā'*, probably refers to the emotional appeal of the propositions. *'Phanditaṁ'* (√*spand* – 'to throb', 'to palpitate') views them as characterised by the restless mental activity. *'Mānagatam'* (√ *mā* – 'to measure') traces their origin to the measuring and judging tendency inherent in conceptual activity, which is itself a constant process of value-judgment. *'Papañcitaṁ'* (*'pra-*√*pañc* – 'to spread out', 'to expand') may likewise imply the prolific tendency in conceptualisation which gave rise to those propositions. The proposition *'asmi'* ('I am') is the foremost *'papañcita,'* and the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta* has already shown us why it is to be reckoned a product of *'papañca.'* The other propositions portray perhaps more clearly, the prolificity in the realm of ideation — the individuating, generalising, particularising and dichotomising tendencies which provide the scaffolding for theoretical super-structures. The particular context in which *'papañcita'* occurs in this *sutta,* thus lends colour to the assumption that *'papañca'* signifies the inveterate tendency towards proliferation in the realm of ideation.

Of an analogous character is a passage occuring at A. IV. 68. Here we find each of the alternatives of a quadrilemma being qualified in seven ways suggestive of aspects. The quadrilemma concerns the state of the Perfected One after his death and comprises the last four of the famous ten moot-points known as the Ten Indeterminates (*Dasa Avyākatavatthūni*). These ten, it may be added, together formed a kind of questionnaire with which the ancient Indians used to confront any religious teacher of note.[1] This questionnaire, arranged in dilemmas and quadrilemmas, seems to have been popularly regarded as a valid ready-reckoner for evaluating any religious system – hence the flippancy with which it was put forward. The Buddha himself was confronted with it on several occasions and in each case he rejected the questionnaire *in toto,* much to the dismay of the interrogators. He held that these ten questions

[1] S. N. IV 398 (*'Kutūhalasālā'* – *Avyākata Saṃyutta.*)

are the outcome of wrong reflection and hence do not admit of a categorical reply. He declared that they are speculative views which are a veritable jungle of error - a set of fetters which bring suffering, frustration, dejection and anguish in their train. That being so, an attempt at their solution was not regarded as conducive to Enlightenment.[1] Now, the passage under consideration containing the quadrilemma, is yet another exposition of the unwholesome character of these speculative views. In it we find the Buddha explaining to a certain monk why an Ariyan disciple conversant with the Dhamma, does not entertain any doubts with regard to the Indeterminate points.

"......*Diṭṭhinirodhā kho bhikkhu sutavato ariyasāvakassa vicikicchā nuppajjati avyākatavatthusu. 'Hoti Tathāgato parammaraṇāti kho bhikkhu diṭṭhigatametaṁ: 'Na hoti Tathāgato parammaraṇāti......... 'Hoti ca na hoti ca Tathāgato parammaraṇāti,......'Neva hoti na na hoti Tathāgato parammaraṇāti' kho bhikkhu diṭṭhigatametaṁ. Assutavā bhikkhu puthujjano diṭṭhiṁ nappajānāti, diṭṭhisamudayaṁ nappajānāti diṭṭhinirodham nappajānāti, diṭṭhinirodhagāminīpaṭipadaṁ nappajānāti, tassa sā diṭṭhi pavaḍḍhati, so na parimuccati jatiyā jarāmaraṇena sokehi paridevehi dukkhehi domanassehi upāyāsehi, na parimuccati dukkhasmāti vadāmi. Sutavā ca kho bhikkhu ariyasāvako diṭṭhiṁ pajānāti, diṭṭhisamudayaṁ pajānāti, diṭṭhinirodhaṁ pajānāti diṭṭhinirodhagāminīpaṭipadaṁ pajānāti, tassa vā diṭṭhi nirujjhati. So parimuccati jātiyā......... dukkhasmāti vadāmi. Evaṁ jānaṃ kho bhikkhu sutavā ariyasāvako evaṁ passaṁ 'Hoti Tathāgato parammaraṇā ti' pi na*

[1] "*Sassato lokoti kho Vaccha, diṭṭhigatametṁ diṭṭhigahaṇaṁ diṭṭhikantāraṁ diṭṭhivisūkaṁ, diṭṭhivipphanditaṁ diṭṭhisaṃyojanaṁ sadukkhaṁ savighātaṁ saupāyāsaṁ sapariḷāhaṁ, na nibbidāya na virāgāya na nirodhāya na upasamāya na abhiññāya na sambodhāya na nibbānāya saṁvattati......*"—M. N. I. 485.

"*Vaccha,* to think that the world is eternal — this is resorting to a (speculative) view, a jungle of views, a wilderness of views, it is accompanied by anguish, distress, misery, fever; it does not conduce to disenchantment nor to dispassion, cessation, calming, super-knowledge, awakening nor to *nibbāna.*"

M. L. S. II 164.

vyākaroti, 'Na hoti...', Hoti ca na hoti ca......'......'Neva hoti na na hoti Tathāgato parammaraṇātipi na vyākaroti. Evaṁ jānaṁ kho bhikkhu sutavā ariyasāvako, evaṁ passaṁ nacchambhati na kampati na calati na vedhati na santāsaṁ āpajjati avyākata vatthusu. 'Hoti Tathāgato......kho bhikkhu taṇhāgatametaṃ saññāgatametaṃ, maññitametaṃ, papakcitametaṃ, upādānagatametaṃ, vippaṭisāro eso. Na hoti........Hoti ca na hoti ca......... neva hoti na na hoti.........vippaṭisāro eso........."

"Verily, it is by the cessation of views, monk, that doubt ceases to arise in the instructed noble disciple as to unexplained points. 'Is the *Tathāgata* after death?' 'Both is he and is he not after death?' 'Neither is he nor is he not after death?' - these are but view points, monk.

"The uninstructed average man does not understand views, does not understand the origin of views, does not understand the cessation of views, does not understand the way leading to the cessation of views. For him views grow; and he is not freed from birth, old age, death, from sorrows, griefs, ills, tribulations; he is not freed from suffering, I say.

"But the instructed noble disciple understands views, understands their origin, their cessation and the way leading to their cessation. For him views cease; and he is freed from birth, old age, death, from sorrows, griefs, ills, tribulations; he is freed from suffering, I say.

"Thus knowing, thus seeing, the instructed noble disciple indeed, does not assert, 'Is the *Tathāgata* after death?' and like questions... Thus knowing, thus seeing, the instructed noble disciple thus holds as unexplained, the unexplained points. Thus knowing, thus seeing, the instructed noble disciple is not afraid, trembles not, wavers not, shakes not, despairs not, concerning these points. 'Is the *Tathāgata* after death?' and the like...... ... These, monks, are but ways of craving......... of perceptions......... are but imaginings...... conceptual proliferations......... issues of grasping......... are but a source of remorse.

— G. S. IV 39 - 40.

One can discern the criticism of the quadrilemma in the seven standpoints from which it is viewed. '*Diṭṭhigataṃ*' suggests the speculative nature of the view. '*Taṇhāgataṁ*' may well refer to the desire that prompts one to 'entertain' these views. '*Saññāgataṁ*' reminds us of the sensory origin of the same. '*Maññitaṁ*' points to the thought activity or imagination that precedes their formulation. '*Upādānagataṁ*' refers to the grasping aspect which makes them dogmas. '*Vippaṭisāro*' emphasises the delusion and wavering that they bring about. As for '*papañcitaṁ*' we may infer that it visualises the proliferating, expanding and diffusing quality of the speculative views in question. The above quadrilemma is actually illustrative of those qualities since it is an unwarranted *extension* of linguistic conventions to what is transcendental.

The dialogue between *Mahā Koṭṭhita* and *Sāriputta* at A. N. II 161 also gives us an insight into the conceptual prolificity implied by '*papañca*.' Here again, the four questions put to *Sāriputta* by *Mahā Koṭṭhita* assume the form of a quadrilemma relating to the transcendental.

Channaṃ āvuso phassāyatanānaṃ asesavirāganirodhā atth'-aññaṃ kiñcīti — Mā hevaṁ āvuso. Channaṃ āvuso......natth' aññaṃ kincī' ti — Mā hevaṁ āvuso' ti. — Channaṁ āvuso...... atthi ca natthi caññaṁ kiñcī' ti. – Mā hevaṁ āvuso. – Channaṁ āvuso...... nevatthi no natth'aññaṁ kiñcī ti. – Mā hevaṁ āvuso.–

Channaṁ āvuso phassāyatanānaṁ asesavirāganirodhā atthaññaṁ kiñcīti iti puṭṭho samāno 'Mā hevaṃ āvuso'ti vadesi. Channaṃ...... natthaññaṁ kiñcīti iti puṭṭho samāno 'Mā hevaṁ āvuso'ti vadesi. Channaṁ ......atthi ca natthi caññaṁ kiñcīti puṭṭho samāno 'Mā hevaṃ āvuso'ti vadesi. Channaṁ...... nevatthi no natth'aññaṁ kiñcīti iti puṭṭho samāno 'Mā hevaṁ āvuso'ti vadesi. Yathākathampanāvuso imassa bhāsītassa attho daṭṭhabbo ti.

Channaṁ āvuso...... atth'aññaṁ kiñcīti iti vadaṃ appapañcaṁ papañceti. – Channaṁ āvuso ...... natth'aññaṃ kiñcīti iti vadaṃ appapañcaṃ papañceti. Channaṁ āvuso...... atthi ca natthi caññaṁ kiñcīti iti vadaṃ appapañcaṃ papañceti. Channaṁ āvuso...... nevatthi no natth'aññaṃ kiñcīti iti vadaṃ appapañcaṁ papañceti.

Yāvata āvuso channaṁ phassāyatanānaṁ gati tāvatā papañcassa gati, yāvatā papañcassa gati, tāvatā channaṁ phassāyatanānam gati. Channaṃ āvuso phassāyatanānaṁ asesavirāganirodhā papañcanirodho papañcavūpasamoti,

"Pray, brother when the six spheres of contact cease without residue, is there anything still left?"

"Ah! say not so, brother."

"Pray, brother, when the six spheres of contact cease without residue, is there not something still left?"

"Ah! say not so, brother."

"Pray brother, when the six spheres of contact cease without residue, is it the case that there both is and is not anything still left?"

"Ah! say not so, brother."

"Pray, brother, when the six spheres of contact cease without residue, is it the case that there neither is nor is not anything still left?"

"Ah! say not so, brother."

"To my several questions thus put, brother, on each occasion you reply: 'Ah! say not so, brother.' Now what am I to understand by this?"

"Brother, he who says: 'When the six spheres of contact cease without residue there is still something left,' is conceptualising what should not be proliferated conceptually...... (repeat with regard to the other three). Brother, whatever is the range of the six spheres of contact, that itself is the range of prolific conceptualisation. And whatever is the range of prolific conceptualisation, that itself is the range of the six spheres of contact. By the utter detachment from, and the cessation of the six spheres of contact, there comes to be the cessation, the allayment. of prolific conceptualisation."

Sāriputta disallows all the four alternatives, saying that they reflect an attempt to indulge in '*papañca*' where one should not resort to it (*appapañcaṁ* <Sk: *aprapañcya?* — hypothetical). He points out that the scope of '*papañca*' is co-extensive with the range of the six senses, and that the cessation of the spheres of six senses without residue, results in the cessation or allayment of *papañca*. Thus the quadrilemma of *Mahākoṭṭhita* turns out to be yet another illustration of the presumptuous attempt of the phenomenal consciousness to transgress its limits of applicability (i.e., the empirical), by overflowing into the transcendental in a spree of speculative metaphysics. Dogmatic speculative views are by far the most virulent and typical instances of '*papañca*' in the sense of prolific conceptualisation.

The reference to a range of '*papañca*' ('*papañcassa gati*') in *Sariputta's* reply, is strongly suggestive of the dynamic import of the term in Buddhist psychology. This particular aspect is evident in several other contexts. At *Udāna* p. 77, for instance, we find the Buddha giving utterance to the following paean of joy while reflecting on the fact that he has rid himself of concepts characterised by proliferating tendencies of the mind (......*attano papañcasaññāsaṅkhāpahānaṃ, paccavekkhamāno*... ......'),

> *Yassa papañcā ṭhiti ca natthi*
> *sandhānaṁ paḷighañca vītivatto*
> *taṁnittaṇhaṁ muniṁ carantaṁ*
> *nāvajānāti sadevako pi loko.*

> "He in whom ramblings and standing-still are no more
> He who has overcome bond and hindrance,
> That sage, from craving free as he fares onward,
> The world with its devas contradicts him not."

Here the juxtaposition of '*papañca*' ('ramblings') with '*ṭhiti*' ('standing-still') seems to suggest the primary sense of the term with its dynamic undertones. Metaphorically conceived, '*papañca*' signifies the ramblings in the realm of ideation and '*ṭhiti*' the dormant tendencies of the mind (*anusaya*)[1] which prompt those ramblings.

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[1] Cf. *Ṭhiti nāma anusayā - Netti.* 37

A verse at S. N. IV 71 also conveys this primary sense of '*papañca*' besides pointing to its essential connection with the process of sense perception.

Papañcasaññā itarītarā narā
papañcayantā upayanti saññino
manomayaṁ gehasitañca sabbaṁ
panujja nekkhammasitaṁ irīyati.

'Being endowed with sense-perception, human beings whose consciousness is characterised by the prolific tendency approach sense-objects (mentally) by proliferating conceptually. Giving up all that is mind-made and is appertaining to household life, he (the recluse) resorts to that which is connected with renunciation.' The approach here meant is a mental one as suggested by the word '*manomayaṁ*,' and it is done in the course of mental ramblings. One might also note the significance of the word '*upayanti*' especially in its sense of 'calling or 'reckoning.'

The fact that '*papañca*' is usually looked upon as a peculiar mental *activity* which the worlding is wont to indulge in, becomes evident from a sutta in the *Sārāṇīya Vagga* of the *Anguttara Nikāya* (A. N. III 292ff). *Sāriputta* there enumerates six types of activity, which if habitually indulged in ('*anuyutta*'), would hinder the spiritual progress of monk.

"*Idhāvuso bhikkhu kammārāmo hoti kammarato kammārāmataṁ anuyutto, bhassārāmo hoti bhassarato bhassārāmataṁ anuyutto, niddārāmo hoti niddārato niddārāmataṁ anuyutto, saṅgaṇikārāmo hoti saṅgaṇikarato saṅgnkārāmataṁ anuyutto, saṁsaggārāmo hoti saṁsaggarato saṁsaggārāmataṃ anuyutto, papañcārāmo hoti papañcarato papañcārāmatam anuyutto. Evaṁ kho āvuso bhikkhu tathā tathā vihāraṁ kappeti, yathā yathāssa vihāraṁ kappayato na bhaddhkaṁ maraṇaṁ hoti na bhaddikā kālakiriyā. Ayaṁ vuccatāvuso bhikkhu sakkāyābhirato, na pahāsi sakkāyaṁ sammā dukkhassa antakiriyāyā'ti.*

'Herein, brethren, a monk finds delight in worldly activity, is delighted in worldly activity, gets engrossed in the delight of worldly activity; so too, of talk, sleep, company, companionship and prolific conceptualisation – finding delight in each, he is

delighted with each and gets engrossed in the delight of each; and thus, brethren, the more he so fashions his life, the more he fashions it to a woeful death, a woeful fate; and of this monk it is said: He is greatly delighted in selfhood; he has not got rid of selfhood for the utter ending of Ill."

G. S. III 210 - 211

The last in the list (*papañca*) is obviously reckoned the most important, so much so that its ethical significance is summed up in a couplet at the end of the sutta.

Yo papañcam anuyutto - papañcābhirato mago
virādhayī so nibbānaṁ - yogakkhemaṁ anuttaraṁ
Yo ca papañcaṁ hitvāna - nippapañcapathe rato
ārādhayī so nibbānaṁ - yogakkhemaṁ anuttaraṁ'[1]

'The fool who indulges in and delights in prolific conceptualisation, is far removed from *Nibbāna* - the incomparable freedom from bondage.

'He who, having given up such conceptualisation, delights in the path to non-proliferation - he attains to *Nibbāna*, the incomparable freedom from bondage.'

Path to Non-Proliferation

Thus the inveterate tendency towards proliferation of concepts manifesting itself through Craving, Conceit and Views ('*taṇhā*,' '*māna*,' '*diṭṭhi*'), is said to estrange the monk from *Nibbāna*, and the aim of the spiritual endeavours is said to lie in the direction of non-proliferation. The path to this state of '*nippapañca*' is set out in the *Sakkapañha-sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*. In this sutta, *Sakka*, the interlocutor, inquires of the Buddha why all great classes of beings such as gods, men, *Asuras*, *Nāgas* and *Gandhabbas*, live in enmity, hating, hostile and malign, inspite of the fact that they wish to live without enmity or hatred. Through a causally connected series of mental states, the Buddha ultimately traces the origin of this unpleasant situation, to

[1] These verses are found also at Thag. vv. 989 - 90.

the question of '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*'.[1] Those mental states, cited in their due order would read as follows:–

> '*issā - macchariya < piyappiya < chanda < vitakka < papañcasaññā saṅkhā.*
>
> envy and selfishness < things dear and not dear < desire < ratiocination < concepts tinged with the prolific tendency.

The causal connection between '*vitakka*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*, might, at first sight, appear intriguing. Acquaintance with the *Madhupiṇḍika* formula of sense-perception (Sic! *vitakka > papañca*) might make one wonder whether we have here a reversal of the correct order (*vitakka < papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*). But the contradiction is more apparent than real. The asserti on of the *Sakkapañha sutta* that '*vitakka*' originates from '*papañca saññā-saṅkhā*' only means that in the case of the worldling the word or concept grasped as an object far ratiocination, is itself a product of '*papañca*.' This, in its turn breeds more of its kind when one proceeds to indulge in conceptual proliferation (*papañca*). Concepts characterised by the proliferating tendency (*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*) constitute the raw-material for the process and the end product is much the same in kind though with this difference that it has greater potency to obsess, bewilder and overwhelm the worlding. Thus there is a curious reciprocity between '*vitakka*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*' - a kind of vicious circle, as it were. Given '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*', there comes to be '*vitakka*' and given '*vitakka*' there arise more '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*,' resulting in the subjection to the same.[2] Owing to this reciprocity, the path

[1] The *Kalahavivāda Sutta* (Sn. 168 ff) also presents a more or less similar series of mental states in tracing the arigin of disputes to '*papañca-saṅkhā*'. — a term virtually equivalent to '*papañca-saññā-saṅkha*'.

[2] Cf'... ...*vitakkapaññattiyā sati papañca-saññā-saṅkhā-samudācaraṇa-paññattiṁ paññapessantīti ṭhānaṁ etaṁ vijjati*'

M. N I 145

'This situation occurs that when there is the manifestation of reasoning, one will point out the manifestation of the assault of the concepts tinged with the proliferating tendency of consciousness.'

leading to the cessation of '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*' as propounded in the *Sakkapañha Sutta*, consists of a mode of training aimed at the progressive elimination of '*vitakka*' and '*vicāra*'.

"*Kathaṁ paṭipanno pana mārisa, bhikkhu papañca-saṅkhā-saṅkhā-nirodha-sāruppa-gāminī-paṭipadaṁ paṭipanno hoti?*"

"*Somanassam p'ahaṁ devānaminda duvidhena vadāmi sevitabbampi asevitabbampī'ti. Domanassam p'ahaṁ ...... Upekkham p'ahaṁ ...... asevitabbampīti.*

Somanassam p'ahaṁ duvidhena...... asevitabbampītiitikho panetaṁ vuttaṁ, Kiñcetaṁ paṭicca vuttaṁ? Tattha yaṁ jaññā somanassaṁ: 'Imaṁ kho me somanassaṁ sevato akusalā dhammā abhivaḍḍhanti kusalā dhammā parihāyantīti evarūpaṁ somanassaṁ na sevitabbaṁ. Tattha yaṁ jaññā somanssaṁ: Imam...... sevato akusālā dhammā parihāyanti kusalā dhammā abhivaḍḍhantīti evarūpaṁ somanassaṁ sevitabbaṁ. Tattha yañce savitakkaṁ savicāraṁ yañce avitakkaṁ avicāraraṁ ye avicre se paṇītatare.

......Domanassampāham duvidhena...... ye avitakke avicāre se paṇītatare...... Upekhampāhaṁ duvidhena...... ye avitakke avitakke avicāre se paṇītatare.

Evaṁ paṭipanno kho devānaminda bhikkhu papañca-saññā saṅkhā-niroaha-sāruppa-gāminī paṭipadaṁ paṭipanno hotīti'.

"But how, sir, has that *bhikkhu* gone about, who has reached the path suitable for and leading to the cessation of concepts tinged with the proliferating tendency".

"Happiness, ruler of gods, I declare to be twofold, according as it is to be followed after or avoided. Unhappiness too, I declare to be twofold...... Equanimity, too, I declare to be twofold......

"And the distinction I have affirmed in happiness, was drawn on these grounds: When in following after happiness one perceives that bad qualities develop and good qualities are diminished that kind of happiness be avoided. And when

following after happiness one perceives that bad qualities are diminished and good qualities develop, then such happiness should be followed. Now of such happiness as is accompained by ratiocination and of such as is not so accompained, the latter is the more excellent.

"Again, ruler of gods, when I declare unhappiness to be twofold...... the latter is the more excellent...... Again, ruler of of gods, when I declare equanimity to be twofold......the latter is the more excellent.

"And it is in this wise that a *bhikkhu*, O ruler of gods, must have gone about, who has reached the path suitable for and leading to the cessation of concepts tinged with the proliferating tendency."

It is significant that although 'applied and sustained thoughts' (*vitakka-vicārā*) conducive to wholesome mental states are utilised to eliminate those conducive to unwholesome mental states — much in the same way as a carpenter would drive out a blunt peg with a sharper one[1] they have merely a relative value. They themselves should finally leave the scene making way for '*Paññā*' (Wisdom) which is immediate and intuitive. Hence the recurrent maxim in the above passage (underlined). A detailed exposition of the process of gradual elimination of concepts occurs in the *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*. There one finds the carpenter-like operation for the deconceptualisation of the mind, whereby each successive 'peg' is being replaced by a sharper one until at last he is able to pull out with ease the sharpest of them all. Indeed the stages there enumerated are 'pegs' on which consciousness hangs — to mix a metaphor. The crucial decision which precedes the removal of the last 'peg' may be fully appreciated in the light of '*papañca*'.

"*Yato kho Poṭṭhapāda bhikkhu idha saka-saññī hoti, so tato amutra tato amutra anupubbena saññaggaṁ phusati. Tassa saññagge ṭhitassa evaṁ hoti: 'Cetayamānassa me pāpiyo, acetayamānassa me seyyo. Ahañceva kho pana ceteyyaṁ*

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[1] This simile is in fact, found in the *Vitakkasaṇṭhāna Sutta* (M. N. I 119)

abhisaṁkhareyyaṁ Imā ca me saññā nirujjheyyuṁ aññā ca oḷārikā saññā uppajjeyyuṁ. Yaṃ nūnāhaṁ na ceteyyaṁ na abhisaṁkhareyyanti.' So na ceva ceteti na abhisaṁkaroti, tassa acetayato anabhisaṁkharoto tā ceva saññā nirujjhanti, aññā ca oḷārikā saññā na uppajjanti. So nirodhaṁ phusati. Evaṃ kho Poṭṭhapāda anupubbābhisaññānirodhasampajānasamāpatti hoti.

— D. N. I 184 ff

"So, from the time *Poṭṭhapāda*, that the bhikkhu is thus conscious in a way brought about by himself (i.e., from the time of the First Rapture), he goes on from one stage to the next, and from that to the next, until he reaches the summit of consciousness. And when he is on the summit of consciousness, it may occur to him: "To be thinking at all, is the inferior state. It were better not to be thinking. Were I to go on thinking and fancying, these ideas, these states of consciousness, I have reached, would pass away, but other coarser ones, might arise. And so I will neither think nor fancy any more." And he does not. And to him neither thinking any more, nor fancying, the ideas, the states of consciousness he had, pass away; and no others, coarser than they, arise. So he touches (the state of) Cessation. Thus is it, *Poṭṭhapāda*, that the mindful attainment of the cessation of perceptions takes place step by step."

The *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta* thus vividly portrays how one can 'step out' as it were, from the ambit of the centripetal forces of '*papañca*', having gradually forced one's way through to the peripheral layers of the whirling maze of '*papañca*', where those forces are at their weakest.

The close relationship between '*vitakka*' and '*papañca*' as well as the necessity of allaying them, seems to be hinted at in the *Uraga Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*. It is noteworthy that the refrain running throughout this *Sutta* of seventeen stanzas, emphasizes the fact that a monk has to quit all bounds both here and hereafter even as the snake sloughs off its worn-out skin. Now, two of the unwholesome tendencies whose abandonment is recommended in the *Sutta*, are '*vitakka*' and '*papañca*'. They are referred to in two contiguous verses, thus:—

Yassa vitakkā vidhūpitā
ajjhattaṁ suvikappitā asesā

so bhikkhu jahāti orapāraṁ
urago jiṇṇamiva tacaṁ purāṇaṁ — (Vs. 7)

'In whom all thoughts which have been concocted within, are burnt without residue, that monk quits bounds both here and hereafter even as the snake its worn - out skin.[1]

Yo nāccasārī na paccasārī
sabaṁ accagamā imaṁ papañcaṁ
so bhikkhu jahāti orapāraṁ
urago jiṇṇamiva tacaṁ purāṇam — (Vs. 8)

'Who neither transgresses nor lags behind, who has, transcended all this conceptual proliferation; that monk quits bounds both here and hereafter even as the snake its worn-out skin'.

One might note how harmoniously the implications of '*papañca*' blend with the expression '*nāccasārī na paccasārī*', as well as with the refrain of the verses.

Specific instructions for the elimination of '*papañca*' by controlling its gate-ways of '*Vitakka-vicāra*' may be seen even in some of the most elementary ethical teachings of Buddhism. For instance, at the level of sense-restraint enjoined for the monk, it is said that he should not dwell on the general or special characteristics of the data of sense-experinece lest unwholesome mental states should flow into his mind.

"And how, O King, is the *bhikkhu* guarded as to the doors of his senses?

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[1] The commentary, however, prefers to explain the first two lines of this stanza so as to mean that evil *vitakkas* connected with lust, ill-will and injury have been totally *cut-off* ('*suvikkappitā*') within the monk when he attain Arahanthood. It is perhaps more appropriate to treat '*suvikappitā*' as an adjective qualifying '*vitakka*' rather than as a verb on a par with '*vidhūpitā*'. Thus the expression '*ajjhattaṁ suvikappitā*' can mean "*well concocted or fabricated within*". In support of this, attention may be drawn to the implications of the word '*vikalpa*'. (Cf. Ud. 71; S. N. I 126)

"When, O King, he sees an object with his eye, he is not entranced in the general appearance or the details of it. He sets himself to restrain that which might give occasion for evil mental states, covetousness and dejection to flow in over him so long as he dwells unrestrained as to his sense of sight. He keeps watch over his faculty of sight and he attains to mastery over it. And so in like manner, when he hears a sound with his ears, or smells an odour with his nose, or tastes a flavour with his tongue, or feels a touch with his body, or when he cognises a phenomenon with his mind, he is not entranced in the general appearance or the details of it......"

— D. B. I 79 - 80. (D. N. I. 70)

This appears to be more or less the ethical statement of what was philosophically stated in the formula of sense-perception in the *Madhupiṇḍika sutta*. The influx of evil mental states tends to overwhelm the monk who is lax in sense-control and thus brings about the subjection to '*papañcasaññā-saṅkhā*.

The fact that the seemingly simple ethical injunction given above, has a deeper significance, would become clearer when we compare it with the Buddha's pithy exhortation to *Bāhiya Dārucīriya* as found in the *Bodhivagga* of the *Udāna*. This exhortation — it must be noted—was so profound at its philosophical core, that *Bāhiya* attained emancipation then and there. It is, however, tantalisingly brief, and runs as follows:-

"*Tasmātiha, Bāhiya, evaṁ sikkhitabbaṁ: diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṁ bhavissati, sute sutamattaṁ bhavissati, mute mutamattaṁ bhavissati, viññāte viññātamattaṁ bhavissati. Evañhi te Bāhiya sikkhitabbaṁ: Yato kho te Bāhiya diṭṭhe...sute...mute...viññāte viññātamattaṁ bhavissati, tato tvaṁ Bāhiya na tena, yato tvaṁ Bāhiya na tena, tato tvaṁ Bāhiya na tattha, yato tvaṁ Bāhiya na tattha tato tvaṁ Bāhiya nev'idha na huraṁ na ubhayamantare esevanto dukkhassāti.*"[1]

"Then, *Bāhiya*, thus must you train yourself: 'In the seen there will be just the seen; in the heard, just the heard in the

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[1] The Commentary cites a number of conflicting interpretations of this cryptic passage.

sensed, just the sensed;[1] in the cognized, just the cognized. That is how, O *Bāhiya*, you must train yourself. Now, when, *Bāhiya*, in the seen there will be to you just the seen, in the heard...... just the cognized, then *Bāhiya*, you will have no 'thereby': when you have no 'thereby,' then *Bāhiya*, you will have no 'therein'; as you, *Bāhiya*, will have no 'therein' it follows that you will have no 'here' or 'beyond', or 'midway-between'. That is just the end of Ill."

— M. A. P. C 10.

The first part of the exhortation presents succinctly the sum-total of sense - restraint, while the latter part interprets the philosophy behind it. This sense-restraint consists in *'stopping-short'*, at the level of sense-data without being led astray by them. He who succeeds in this, has truly comprehended the nature of sense-data so that he no longer thinks *in terms of* them (*'na tena'* = no 'thereby'' *'na tattha'* - no 'therein'). He has thus transcended the superstitions of the grammatical structure as also the verbal dichotomy (*nev'idha, na huraṁ, na ubhayamantare* = 'neither here nor beyond nor midway between'.) In short, he has attained the Goal. As for *Bāhiya*, he did attain the Goal, and that almost instantaneously, since he had developed his spiritual faculties to such an extent in his own religious system, that — we are told in the *Sutta* - he even entertained the illusion of being an arahant before he came to the Buddha.

The consummation of the training in sense-restraint, therefore, consists in the ability to refrain from 'thinking in terms of' (*maññanā*) the data of sensory experience. The chimerical and elusive nature of sense data is such that as soon as one thinks in terms of them, one is estranged from reality. This fact is brought out in the following verse in the *Dvayatānupassanā Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*.

Yena yena hi maññanti – tato taṁ hoti aññathā,
taṁ hi tassa musā hoti – mosadhammaṁ hi ittaraṁ

— Vs. 757

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[1] *'Muta'*, stands for the sense impressions received by smelling, tasting and touching.

"In whatever egoistic terms they think of an object, *ipso facto* it becomes otherwise. And herein, verily, lies its falseness, the puerile deceptive phenomenon that it is."

It is this same relentless tyranny of the empirical consciousness that is metaphorically put across in the parable of Vepacitti discussed above. '*Maññanā*' (imaginings) which stem from the triune '*papañca*' centring on the ego, are themselves even called '*papañca*', as we have already pointed out. Hence, to resort to '*maññanā*' is to identify oneself with the sense data, as suggested by the term '*tammayo*'.[1] No sooner does one clutch at these data with '*maññanā*' (imaginings) than they slip into unreality. This is most probably the philosophical implication of the well-known simile of the Buddha in which the aggregate of perceptions (*saññā*) is compared to a mirage — the typical illustration of elusiveness (*vide supra* 7 fn 1). Thus percepts are elusive, while the concepts with which we reach out for and 'grasp' them, are delusive. Since identification with sense-data results in the vain quest of '*papañca*,' one desists therefrom, holds oneself aloof ('*atammayo*') and attempts to view those data objectively. As the *Sappurisa Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* explains in detail, this training ultimately enables one to rid oneself of all proclivities to imaginings ('*maññanā*') after the attainment of the Cessation of Perceptions and Sensations ('*Saññāvedayitanirodha-samāpatti*').

......Sappuriso ca kho bhikkhave iti paṭisañcikkhati: Nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana samāpattiyā pikho atammayatā vuttā Bhagavatā; yena yena hi maññanti tato taṁ hoti aññathā ti. So atammayataṁ yeva antaraṁ karitvā tāya nevasaññānāsaññāyatanasamāpattiyā nev' attānukkaṁseti na paraṁ vaṁbheti. Ayam pi, bhikkhave, sappurisadhammo.

Puna ca paraṁ, bhikkhave, sappuriso sabbaso nevasaññā-saññāyatanāṁ samatikkama saññāvedayitanirodhaṁ upasampajja

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[1] '*Tammaya*' = tad + maya, (lit.) 'made of that' — Nid. I 206, '*Na hi tammayo so' ti nā taṇhāvasena diṭṭhivasena tammayo hoti tapparamo tapparāyano*'. — The word and its opposite occur at M. III 42 ff, Sn. 846, A. N. I 150.

viharati, paññāya cassa disvā āsavā parikkhayāpenti. Ayampi, bhikkhave, bhikkhu na kiñci maññāti, na kuhinci maññāti, na kenaci maññatīti."

— M. N. III 44 - 45

"But a good man reflects thus, monks: Lack of desire (non-identification) even for the plane of neither-perception-nor-non-perception has been spoken of by the Lord: 'for whatever they imagine it to be, thereby it becomes otherwise.' He, having made lack of desire (non-identification) itself the main thing, neither exalts himself on account of that attainment of the plane of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, nor disparages others. This, too, monks, is dhamma of a good man.

"And again, monks, a good man, by passing quite beyond the plane of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, enters on and abides in the cessation of perception and feeling; and when he has seen by means of wisdom, his cankers are caused to be destroyed. And, monks, this monk does not imagine he is aught or anywhere or in anything."

— M. L. S. III 93 - 4.

The sage who, by putting an end to '*maññanā*' no longer identifies himself with any element of sense data, is called '*Atammayo*'.

Pasayha māraṁ abhibhuyya antakaṁ.
yo ca phusī jātikkhayaṁ padhānavā
so tādiso[1] *lokavidū sumedho*
sabbesu dhammesu atammayo munī

— A. N. I. 150

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[1] It is likely that the word '*tādi*' or *tādiso*' used as an epithet for the emancipated sage, bears some relation to the word '*tammaya*.' Being derived from 'tādrs' ('tad + drś') it means 'of that appearance,' 'like that' or 'such'. The sage never identifies himself with any phenomenon that we usually associate with him, though, *apparently* he does. Thus he is '*like* that' (*tādiso*) but not '*of* that'. (*attammayo*). This may well account for the firmness and steadfastness of the sage. (Cf. *Kālakārāma Sutta*, A. N. II 24 f.)

"That persevering sage who, having conquered Māra, and vanquished Death, has reached the end of births, the wise one, endowed with true knowledge of the world, is 'such' and as regards all phenomena, he is not 'of-them.'"

From the standpoint of the average worldling, there is an ego as the agent or mentor behind the sum-total of sense-experience. Its existence is postulated on the basis of a wide variety of soul-theories, and its reality as an incontrovertible self-evident fact of experience, is readily taken for granted. Even at the end of a thorough introspection, he is often tempted to agree with Descartes in concluding 'Cogito, ergo sum' ("I think, therefore, I am"). Thus behind the data of sense-experience conditionally arisen, there looms large the illusion of an ego as the agent. It is the root of '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*,' and its eradication, the aim of the spiritual training in Buddhism. This fact is clearly brought out in the following two verses of the *Tuvaṭaka Sutta* (Sn.)

Pucchāmi taṁ ādiccabandhuṁ
vivekaṁ santipadañca mahesiṁ:
kathaṁ disvā nibbāti bhikkhu
anupādiyāno lokasmiṁ kiñci.

— ibid, vs 915

"I ask you, who are a kinsman of the *Ādiccas* and a great sage, about seclusion and the state of peace, with what manner of insight, and not grasping anything in this world, does a bhikkhu realize *Nibbāna*?"

Mūlaṁ papañcasaṅkhāyāti Bhagavā
mantā asmīti sabbaṁ uparundhe,
Yā kāci taṇhā ajjhattaṁ
tāsaṁ vinayā sadā sato sikkhe.

— ibid, vs 916

"Let him completely cut off the root of concepts tinged with the prolific tendency, namely, the notion - 'I am the

thinker'.[1]"—so said the Buddha. "Whatever inward cravings there be, let him train himself to subdue them being always mindful."

The eradication of the illusion of an ego, has to be accomplished through penetrative wisdom focussed on one's own personality. He has to analyse the mental and corporeal constituents of his individuality and see them in their correct perspective, as being impermanent (*anicca*), fraught with suffering (*dukkha*) and not his own (*anattā*). He has to bring about a total transformation of his concept of individuality which is characterised by '*papañca*.' A verse in the *Sabhiya Sutta* (Sn.) may be examined with profit in this connection.

Anuvicca papañca nāmarūpaṁ
ajjhattaṁ bahiddhā ca rogamūlaṁ,
sabbarogamūlabandhanā pamutto
anuvidito tādi pavuccate tathattā.

— Sn. vs. 530

"He who has comprehended 'name-and form characterised by the prolific tendency', which is the root of sickness within and without, is released from bondage to the root of all sickness, and is truly called the 'Knowing One' — the 'Such".

The '*papañca*' which taints the worldling's concept of his individuality is none other than the notion of an ego (*v. supra* 14–'*asmīti bhikkhave papañcitaṁ*') This wrong notion is said to be the root of all sickness within the individual and out in the society. The diseases in the case of the individual, are lust (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*), while some of their symptomatic manifestations in the society are quarrels (*kalaha*),

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[1] The *Niddesa* takes '*mantā*' to be a synonym for '*paññā* ('*mantā vuccati paññā* - p. 497) or wisdom. But the primary meaning can be traced to the agent noun '*mantar*' (sk. *mantṛ*) – '*thinker*' as it has been suggested in the P. T. S. Dictionary. 'Wisdom' may be regarded as a secondary meaning which is permissible in many a context where the word occurs. Yet in this context the primary sense ('thinker') is preferable. (See also *Bst. Psy. of Perc.* pg. 5;

A. N. IV 103; Sn. vs. 159).

strife (*viggaha*), dispute (*vivāda*), conceit (*mānātimāna*), slander (*pesuñña*), jealousy and avarice (*issāmacchariya*). The relevance of '*papañca*' to an analysis of the individual and social sickness referred to above, is amply illustrated in suttas like *Madhupiṇḍika*, *Sakkapañha* and *Kalahavivāda*.

The above verse has received a different interpretation at the hands of Dr. Saratchandra. He observes:—

"........We should consider that here, too, the term *nāmarūpa* meant both the empirical individual, made up of physiological and psychological factors, as well as the entire world including himself, components of mind and matter. The belief that the normal thinking consciousness constitutes the real individual, is the internal sickness (*ajjahattaṁ*). It is for this thinking consciousness that an external world exists. The idea of the external world is therefore, the sickness outside (*bahiddhā*). He who has pierced this veil (*anuvicca*) is called the knowing one (*anuvidita*), for he has attained to true understanding of things as they really are (*tatha*)".

— Bst. Psy. of Perc. pg. 8

On the strength of this interpretation of the verse, he proceeds to define the term '*papañca*':—

"......Sense perception, therefore, implies a dual relationship, the relationship of the perceiving individual and the world as perceived. In its subjective aspect it is consciousness, and in its objective aspect it is the world of perception, and *papañca* is the general term for both aspects."

He seems to have construed the verse in such a manner as to identify the 'internal and external sickness' with the term '*papañcanāmarūpa*'. The bifurcation he resorts to in his definition of '*papañca*' as 'the perceiving individual and the world as perceived,' is the logical outcome of this identification. There is also an overlapping of the definitions given to '*papañca*' and '*nāmarūpa*,' which almost gives rise to a tautology. A comparison of the verse in question with five other verses

occurring in the same *sutta*,[1] would however reveal that the verse has to be differently construed and interpreted. The phrase '*ajjhattaṁ bahiddhā ca*' (internal and external) occurs in those five verses as well, and taken in conjunction with the word '*sabba*' (all) occuring in four of them, it seems to denote the 'individual' and 'social' aspects of the subject dealt with in each verse, conveying the idea of comprehensiveness. Yet the Vs. 532 has a closer resemblance to the particular verse under consideration, in that it refers to the root of all bondage ('*sabbasaṅgamūla*') both internal and external. Hence both verses seem to envisage something radical in their first line — something which is the root of bondage or sickness manifest in the individual and in the society. It is not advisable, therefore, to identify the 'sickness' with '*papañca-nāma-rūpa*' occurring in the first line of the verse, as Dr. Saratchandra does. Nor is it necessary to bifurcate '*papañca nāmarūpa*' into two aspects as internal and external, as the pair of words '*ajjhattaṁ*' and '*bahiddhā*' pertains to the sickness itself rather than to its root. We have already pointed

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[1] *Yassindriyani bhavitani-ajjhattaṁ bahiddho ca sabbaloke*
nibbijjha imaṁ papañca lokam - kālaṁ kaṁkhati bhāvito sa danto.

— Vs. 516

Ninhāya sabbapāpakāni-ajjhattaṁ bahiddhā ca sabbaloke
devamanussesu kappiyesu - kappanneti tamāhu nhātako'ti

— Vs. 521

Dubhayāni viceyya paṇḍarāni - ajjhattaṁ bahiddhā ca suddipañño
Kaṇhā sukkaṁ upātivatto - paṇḍito tādi pavuccate tathattā,

— Vs. 526

Asatañca satañca ñatvā dhammaṁ - ajjhattaṁ bahiddhā ca sabbaloke
devamanussesu pūjiyo so - saṅgaṁ jālaṁ aticca so munī'ti

— Vs. 527

Yassassu lutāni bandhanāni - ajjhattaṁ bahiddhā ca saṅgamūlaṁ
sabbasaṅgamūlabandhanā pamutto - ājāniyo tādi pavuccate tathattā.

— Vs. 532

out with special reference to suttas like *Madhupiṇḍika*, *Sakka-pañha*, and *Kalahavivāda*, the nature of this sickness as it manifests both within the individual and in the society. When the verse is thus construed, the definition of '*papañca*' advanced by Dr. Saratchandra, can hardly be considered plausible.

Relative Validity and Pragmatic Value of Concepts

That 'Knowing One' who is fully emancipated from the root of all internal and external sickness, is also called '*nippapañco*' or '*nippapañcarato*' ('one who delights in non-proliferation). Since he has cut off the tendencies towards the triple proliferation in concepts ('*chinnapapañco*') he has brought about its allayment (*papañcavūpasama*), its cessation ('*papañcanirodha*'). He has rid himself of concepts subjectively tinged with '*papañca*' ('*papañcasaṅkhāpahāna*'). The data of sense-experience, both percepts and concepts, which enter his mind, are more or less summarily dealt with, as we saw in the exhortation to *Bāhiya*. They may enter through the portals of 'thought' (*vitakka*), but they never reverberate through the corridors of his mind as echoes of 'conceptual proliferation by way of Craving, Conceit and Views' (*taṇhā-māna-diṭṭhi-papañca*). They never interfere with the sublime quietude reigning within the inner recesses of his mind. Freedom from '*papañca*' is the hall-mark of the emancipated one, however much thoughts, deliberations and 'thoughts of a great man' (*vitakka*, *parivitakka*, *mahāpurisa-vitakka*) he may be said to entertain. This gives the clue to the silence (*mona*) associated with the '*muni*' (the emancipated sage). The '*muni*' is silent not only when he does not speak; he is silent even when he *does* speak. Hence the seemingly incongruous statement of the Buddha: "Monks, I do not dispute with the world; it is the world that disputes with me."[1] Not only the Buddha, but the emancipated monk, too, has no dispute with the world but merely uses the worldly parlance without clinging to it. The *Madhupiṇḍika* and *Sakkapañha Suttas*, as well as several suttas like *Kalahavivāda*, *Cūḷaviyūha* and *Mahāviyūha* of the *Aṭṭhaka Vagga* of the *Sutta Nipāta*, lay particular stress on this strange

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[1] "*Nāhaṁ bhikkhave lokena vivadāmi, loko ca mayā vivadati*"
— S. N. III 138

aspect of '*muni*.' Strange indeed it might appear, when in numerous suttas we find the Buddha and the arahants vigorously debating with the heretics and refuting their views. Yet even in the thick of the debate the sage is silent within, and holds himself aloof, since he has no axe to grind – has nothing to gain or lose by it. He has no attachment (*taṅhā*) to his arguments, no conceit (*māna*) to be safeguarded and no views (*diṭṭhi*) to be dogmatically entertained.[1] Perhaps the most remarkable is the last mentioned. In many a context it is said that the *muni* has abandoned all views.[2] He has no views because he has got rid of the *point* of view, that is, the illusion of the ego. Hence he neither

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[1] *Pahīnamānassa na santi ganthā*
vidhūpitā mānaganthāssa sabbe
sa vītivatto yamatam sumedho
ahaṁ vadāmīti pi so vadeyya
mamaṁ vadantīti pi so vadeyya
loke samaññaṁ kusalo viditvā
vohāramattena so vohareyyāti.
— S. N. I. 14 - 15

'For him who hath renounced them utterly
Chains of illusion as to self or soul
Exist no more, scattered are all such bonds.
He, rich in wisdom hath escaped beyond
Conceits and deemings of the errant mind.
He might say thus: "I say"
"They say it to me".
So saying he; expert in usages
Of men; aware of the worth of common names
Would speak merely conforming to such use'.

Upayo hi dhammesu upeti vādaṁ
anūpayaṁ kena kathaṁ vadeyya,
attaṁ nirattaṁ na hi tassa atthi
adhosi so diṭṭhim idheva sabbā. — Sn. Vs. 787

'One who has clingings enters into disputations amongst the dogmas. How and wherefore would one speak of him who is not obsessed with clingings. For by him there is nothing grasped or rejected, he has in this world shaken off every philosophical view'.

formulates nor proffers any views.[1] There is, however, a widespread tendency to define the world *'ditthi'* in such contexts strictly to mean the traditional list of sixty-two false views (*micchā-ditthi*) as given in the ***Brahmajāla Sutta*** (D. N.). This tendency is evident in the commentaries, which, while defining *'tañhā'* and *'māna'* in a more elementary form as to be comprehensive, take great care to be more specific in the case of *'ditthi'*. This may be due partly to a complacent belief that the list of sixty-two comprehends all possible forms of *ditthi*, and partly also to a desire to safeguard 'Right - view' (*sammā-ditthi*). But it appears that this commentarial definition has created new problems. *'Ditthi'* has thereby lost its fundamental significance as the deep-seated proclivity in the worldling's mind to be beguiled by concepts,[2]. If by *'ditthipapañca'* is meant merely the sixty-two false views, then it would be possible for the disciple of the Buddha to put an end to *'ditthipapañca'* by virtue of the very fact that he has given up false views. But as we have shown above, it persists even in the disciple as the notion of an ego until he attains *Nibbāna*. Besides, the tendency towards *'ditthi'* in the sense of dogmatic involvement in concepts, can also become manifest through *Sammā Ditthi* in its theoretical aspect. It can assume the form of attachment to concepts which constitute *'Sammā Ditthi'*. It is precisely this danger that the Buddha forewarns against, in the 'Parable of the Raft' in the *Alagaddūpama Sutta* (M. N. p. 134ff). Therein the Buddha declares in unmistakable terms that he is preaching the Dhamma which is comparable to a raft, just for the purpose of crossing over (the

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[1] *Na kappayanti na purekkharonti*
accantasuddhīti na te vadanti
ādānaganthaṁ gathitaṁ visajja
āsaṁ na kubbanti kuhiñci loke — Vs. 794

They neither formulate nor proffer theories. They do not say — 'this is the highest purity'. Giving up the bonds of attachment, they form no attachment anywhere in this world.'

[2] *Vide Supra* p. 17 - *ditthi* (view), *ditthisamudaya* (view-origin) *ditthinirodha* (view-cessation), *ditthinirodhagāminī patipadā* (the stepping of the way to view - cessation). Cf. Khema Sutta. — S. N. III 126 ff.

sea of *Samsāra*), and not for grasping dogmatically. After crossing over, even the *'dhammas'* have to be discarded, not to speak of the *'adhammas'* (i. e. 'what does not pertain to Dhamma'). The parable which is so instructive as to merit analysis, runs thus:—

"Monks, as a man going along a highway might see a great stretch of water, the hither bank dangerous and frightening, the further bank secure, not frightening; but if there were not a boat for crossing by or a bridge across for going from the not-beyond to the beyond, this might occur to him. 'This is a great stretch of water; suppose that I, having collected grass, sticks, branches and foliage, and having tied a raft, depending on that raft and striving with hands and feet, should cross over safely to the beyond?' Then monks, that man, having collected grass......... and striving with hands and feet, might cross over safely to the beyond. To him crossed over, gone beyond, this might occur: 'Now this raft has been very useful to me. I, depending on this raft and striving with my hands and feet, crossed over safely to the beyond. Suppose now that I, having put this raft on my head, or having lifted it on to my shoulder, should proceed as I desire?' What do you think about this, monks? If that man does this, is he doing what should be done with the raft?"

"No, Lord".

"What should that man do, monks, in order to do what should be done with that raft? In this case, monks, it might occur to that man who has crossed over, gone beyond: 'Now this raft has been very useful to me. Depending on this raft and striving with my hands and feet, I have crossed over safely to the beyond. Suppose now that I, having beached this raft on dry ground or having submerged it under the water, should proceed as I desire?' In doing this, monks, that man would be doing what should be done with that raft. *Even so, monks, is the Parable of the Raft, Dhamma, taught by me for crossing over, not for retaining. You, monks, by understanding the Parable of the Raft, should get rid even of right mental objects, all the more of wrong ones*". (*......Evameva kho bhikkhave kullūpamo mayā dhammo desito nittharaṇatthāya no gahaṇatthāya. Kullūpamaṁ vo bhikkhave*

dhammaṁ desitaṁ ājānantehi dhammā pi vo pahātabbā pageva adhammā).

— M. L. S. I 173

Thus the 'Parable of the Raft' is a typical illustration of the relative and pragmatic value of the Dhamma. The raft is *improvised* out of the stray twigs and branches growing on the hither bank. By merely boarding the raft, by clutching at it, by decorating it with more twigs and branches one does not arrive at the further bank. One has to exert oneself, having embarked for the beyond, and has gradually to cross over with the aid of the raft. Once he has reached the futher bank, he has to disembark; he has to abandon and disown the raft. He might, however, out of compassion instruct those living on the hither bank, as to how they should build similar rafts for themselves. But for his part, he no longer needs a raft. He has realised that the raft is useful and meaningful at the hither bank, as it is the product of the twigs and branches growing there. Similarly, 'Dhamma' which constitutes the theoretical content of *Sammā Diṭṭhi* is *improvised* out of the medium of language and logic in worldly parlance. By merely mastering it, by dogmatically clinging to it,[1] by clothing it with more concepts, one does not reach the Goal. One has to exert oneself spiritually, having mastered the Dhamma, in order to attain *Nibbāna.* Now, after his attainment, the pragmatic value of the Dhamma is lost for him, but as he is now convinced of its value for the suffering worldlings, he might preach it to them out of disinterested compassion. As for the truth value of the Dhamma, it has its

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[1] *Imañce tumhe bhikkhave diṭṭhiṁ evaṁ parisuddhaṁ evaṁ pariyodātaṁ allīyetha kelāyetha dhanāyetha mamāyetha, api nu tumhe bhikkhave kullūpamaṁ dhammaṁ desitaṁ ājāneyyātha nittharaṇatthāya no gahaṇatthāyāti—No hetam bhante.*

— M. N. I 260

"If you, monks, cling to, treasure, cherish, foster this view, thus purified, thus cleansed, then, monks, would you understand that the Parable of the Raft is dhamma taught for crossing over, not for retaining?" "No, Lord".

— M. L. S. I. 316

validity from the worldling's point of view, as it is presented through the media familar to him Thus the truth value of Dhamma — of *Sammā Diṭṭhi* — pertains to the path, and it is essentially a *view* of the Goal and not the Goal itself. Dhamma or '*Sammā Diṭṭhi*,' we may add, is neither more nor less true of the Goal, than the raft is of the further bank. Being a form of *Diṭṭhi* or view, it presupposes a view-point, and it is, or ought to be, the view-point of the Ariyan disciple. As we have earlier pointed out, the emancipated sage has no view-point — indeed he needs none as he has reached the Goal. He has transcended all views of Truth and is in possession of a vision of it.[1] Thus we arrive at another paradox, as in the case of 'the silence' of the '*muni*'. The sage does not entertain any views not only when he refutes '*micchā-diṭṭhi*,' (false view) but also when he *preaches* '*sammā diṭṭhi*' (right view). It may also be mentioned that '*Sammā Diṭṭhi*' itself embodies the seed of its own transcendence, as its purpose is to purge the mind of all views inclusive of itself. This dialectic aspect of the Dhamma, has had a staggering effect on the society to which it was first preached, and the Buddha himself refers to it in the *Alagaddūpama Sutta.*

"*Idha bhikkhu ekaccassa evaṁ diṭṭhi hoti: So loko so attā so pecca bhavissāmi, nicco dhuvo sassato avipariṇāmadhammo sassatisamaṁ tatheva ṭhassāmīti. So suṇāti Tathāgatassa vā Tathāgatasāvakassa vā sabbesaṁ diṭṭhiṭṭhānādhiṭṭhānapariyuṭṭhānābhinivesānusayānaṁ samugghātāya sabba saṁkhārasamathāya sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggāya taṇhakkhayāya virāgāya nirodhāya dhammaṁ desentassa. Tassa evaṁ hoti: Ucchijjissāmi nāma su, vinassissāmi nāma su, na su nāma bhavissāmīti. So socati kilamati paridevati urattāliṁ kandati sammohaṁ āpajjati. Evam kho bhikkhu ajjhattaṁ asati paritassanā hotīti.*

M. N. I 137 - 8

"In this case, monk, the view occurs to someone: 'This the world, this the self; after dying I will become permanent, lasting, eternal, not liable to change, I will stand fast like unto the eternal'. He hears dhamma as it is being taught by the

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[1] *Diṭṭhiñca anupagamma sīlavā dassanena sampanno.* Sn. Vs. 152.

Tathāgata or by a disciple of the *Tathāgata,* for rooting out all resolve for bias, tendency, and addiction to view and causal relation, for tranquilising all the activities, for casting away all attachment, for the destruction of craving, for dispassion, cessation, *nibbāna.* It occurs to him thus: 'I will surely be annihilated, I will surely be destroyed, I will surely not be.' He grieves, mourns, laments, beats his breast and falls into disillusionment. Thus, monks, there comes to be anxiety about something subjective that does not exist."

M. L. S. I. 175 - 6

Thus '*Sammā Diṭṭhi*' aims at the utter eradication of all views together with propensities towards the same. The entire conceptual structure has to leave — though gradually — and in the final reckoning, even those concepts that have rendered us the greatest help in our spiritual endeavour, have to make their bow. As such, one must be extremely cautious in regard to concepts pertaining to *Sammā Diṭṭhi.* One might distinguish between the relatively true and false in theory, between the precise and the vague in terminology, between the scholastic and the wayward in phraseology, but one has to remember that as concepts they are all one. Nor should one seriously regard some concepts as absolute and inviolable categories in preference to others, and pack them up in water-tight cartons labelled '*paramattha*'. Indeed, he may regard some concepts as *paramattha* in the sense that they are more conducive to the attainment of the Goal than others — truer, more precise and more scholastic. In this connction we may also add that the word '*paramattha*' in its earlier and non-technical usage, actually meant the Highest Goal as the object of realisation, and any words tending towards that goal were called '*paramatthasaṃhita*'[1] ('connected with the

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[1] *Uḷāraṁ vata me mātā-patodaṁ samavassari*
paramatthasaṁhitāgāthā-yathāpi anukampikā

— Thig. Vs. 210.

'O! splendid was the spur my mother used
And no less merciful the chastisement
She gave to me, even the rune she spoke
Fraught with its burden of sublimest good.

P. E. B. I 104 - 5

Highest Goal'), irrespective of their precision or technicality. However the Buddha, for his part, was content to treat all of them as '*sammuti*'. For him, they were 'merely worldly conventions in common use, which he made use of, without clinging to them' (D. N. I. 202).

One wonders whether this simple though profound attitude of the Buddha towards concepts, has been properly handed down in tradition, when for instance one comes across the following verse quoted approvingly by Buddhaghosa (source unknown) in his commentary to the *Anaṅgana Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*.

Duve saccāni akkhāsi-sambuddho vadataṁ varo
sammutiṁ paramatthañca – tatiyaṁ nūpalabbhati.
Saṅketavacanaṁ saccaṁ – lokasammutikāraṇā
paramatthavacanaṁ saccaṁ – dhammānaṁ bhūtakāraṇā
tasmā vohārakusalassa - lokanāthassa satthuno
sammutiṁ voharantassa - musāvādo na jāyati.

'The Fully Enlightened One, the best of those who speak, declared two truths, the conventional and the absolute; there can be no third.

'Words of symbolic nature are true by reason of their existence in worldly parlance. Words of absolute significance, are true by reason of the existence of elements.

'Hence, even though the Lord of the World, the Teacher versed in worldly parlance, makes use of such conventional speech, there arises no offence of falsehood for him.'

If one can appreciate the significance of the term '*nippapañca*,' one might realise that the Buddha could magnanimously afford to dispense with such naive defences as the above, against any charges of his having violated the fourth precept.

Yet another deviation from the original position at the commentarial level, is to be seen in Buddhaghosa's interpretation of a passage in the *Vinaya Chullavagga*, concerning the Buddha's attitude towards language. At Vin. II 139 it is said that two monks named Yamelu and Tekula, who were brahmins skilled in

the elegancies of expression (*'kalyāṇavācā kalyāṇavākkaraṇā*), once complained to the Buddha that the word of the Buddha is being corrupted by those who, having entered the Order from various castes and tribes, were using their own dialects to study the Dhamma (*'.........Etarahi bhante bhikkhū nānānāmā nānā-gottā nānājaccā nānākulā pabbajitā te sakāya niruttiyā buddha-vacanaṁ dūsenti*). Hence in order to stop that corruption, they sought the Buddha's permission to apply the rigours of metre in fixing the text of the Buddha's words. (*'.........handa mayaṁ bhante buddhavacanaṁ chandaso āropemāti'*). The Buddha, however, rebuked them, saying that the proposed method was not conducive to the progress of the Dispensation, and having rejected the offer, made an 'allowance' for the liberal study of the Dhamma *in one's own language*. (*'Anujanāmi bhikkhave sakāya niruttiyā buddhavacanaṁ pariyāpunituṁ'*). Curiously enough, this last sentence in the *Chullavagga* passage, has been so interpreted by Buddhaghosa as to mean that the Buddha wished everyone study the Dhamma *in the Buddha's own language* (*'...... Sakāya niruttiyāti ettha sakānirutti nāma sammāsambuddhena vuttappakāro Māghadhikavohāro'*) (Smp. VI 1214). Quite apart from the question of *'papañca'*, the very context itself points to the fact that the Buddha never subscribed to such a view. The Buddha's rebuke of the two monks in rejecting their offer and the obvious implications of the two words *'sakāya niruttiyā'* ('one's own dialect': note that the same expression was used by the two monks) would go to prove that the Buddha *allowed* everyone to learn the Dhamma in his own language, as a measure conducive to its dissemination.[1] How liberal the Buddha was, with

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[1] This Chv. passage has been variously interpreted by modern scholars. Rhys Davids and Oldenberg, in the Vinaya Translations (Vin. Texts. S. B. E. XX. p. 150fn.) take the words *'chandaso āropema'* as a reference to earlier Sanskrit, thus agreeing with *Buddhaghosa* (*'chandaso āropemāti vedaṁ viya sakkatobhāsāya vācanāmaggaṁ āropema' — Smp*). But they translate the expression rendering *'chandaso'* as (Sanskrit) 'verse.' In rendering the Buddha's 'allowance' to monks in which the

regard to the dialects in worldly usage, may be clearly seen in the following passage of the *Araṇavibhanga Sutta* (M. N.)

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words *'sakāya niruttiyā'* occur, they deviate from the commentarial tradition more distinctly: 'I allow you, O *Bhikkhus*, to learn the word of the Buddhas *each in his own dialect*'.

Oldenberg, while holding that the passage sanctions everyone 'to learn the sacred texts in his own language', doubts its authenticity when he says: "This story will scarcely induce us to believe that such a decree proceeded from the Buddha himself". (Vin. I, Introd. XLVIII). We feel, on the contrary, that this decree is quite in keeping with the Buddha's attitude towards dialects.

Geiger, who also takes *'chandas'* to mean either Sanskrit or Sanskrit verse, fully endorses Buddhaghosa's peculiar rendering of *'Sakāya niruttiyā'*. He proceeds to conclude that even during the lifetime of the Buddha, there was a strong tendency to preserve unchanged the Buddha's teachings not only as to its content but also with regard to its external form, and that according to this passage the Buddha encourages that tendency. He even observes that 'neither the two monks nor Buddha himself could have thought of preaching in different dialects in different cases.'

— *Pali Literature and Language*,
Introd. p. 7

Miss Horner likewise grants the possibility that *'chandas'* can mean Sanskrit, but she considers that the intention of the two monks is to 'give the speech of the Awakened One in metrical form'. '*Buddhaghosa's* specification that the expression *'Sakāya niruttiyā* in the *latter* instance (Note that Bdg. explains that expression *after* commenting on *'chandaso āropema'*) means the Buddha's own dialect *Māgadī*, has been generalised by Miss Horner. Thus she renders the request of the two monks: 'At present, Lord, monks of various names, various clans, variout social strata, have gone forth from various families; these corrups the speech of the Awakened One in using *his own* dialect'. (Books of Discipline 5., S.B.B. XX 194). The issue now seems to have become rather complicated.

It is very likely that the intention of Yamelu and Tekula was to safeguard the sanctity or purity of the Buddha's words from

Janapadaniruttiṁ nābhiniveseyya, samaññaṁ nātidhāveyyāti iti kho panetaṁ vuttaṁ. Kiñcetaṁ paṭicca vuttaṁ? Kathañca bhikkhave janapadaniruttiyā ca abhiniveso hoti samaññāya ca atisāro? Idha bhikkhave, tadevekaccesu janapadesu Pātī'ti sañjānanti, Pattan'ti sañjānanti, Vitthan'ti sañjānanti, Sarāvan'ti sañjānanti, Dhāropan'ti sañjānanti, Poṇant'i sañjānanti, Pisīlan'ti sañjānanti. Iti yathā yathā naṁ tesu tesu janapadesu sañjānanti, tathā tathā thāmasā parāmussa abhinivissa voharati: Idameva saccaṁ moghaṁ aññanti. Evam kho bhikkhave janapadaniruttiyā ca abhiniveso hoti samaññāya ca atisaro. Kathañca bhikkhave janapadaniruttiyā ca anabhiniveso hoti samaññāya ca anatisaro? Idha bhikkhave tadevekaccesu...... sañjānanti. Iti yathā yathā naṁ tesu tesu janapadesu sañjānanti. Idaṁ kira'me āyasmanto sandhāya voharantī'ti tathā tathā voharati aparāmasaṁ. Evaṁ kho bhikkhave janapadaniruttiyā ca anabhiniveso hoti, samaññāya ca anatisaro...... (M. N. III 234 ff.)

"When it is said: 'One should not affect the dialect of the countryside, one should not deviate from recognised parlance,' in reference to what is it said? And what, monks, is affectation of the dialect of the countryside and what is departure from recognised parlance? In this case, monks, in different districts they know (the different words): *Pāti.........Patta......Vittha...... Sarāva......Dhāropa......Poṇa......Pisīla.*[1] Thus as they know the word as this or that in these various districts, so does a person, obstinately clinging to it and adhering to it, explain: 'This indeed is the truth, all else is falsehood.' Thus, monks, is affectation of the dialect of the countryside and departure from

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possible infiltration of dialectical variants and phonetic decay. Hence the remedy cannot lie in merely translating the Buddhavacana into Sanskrit. Those two monks probably had a sophisticated attitude towards language (note the epithets *'kalyāṇavācā' 'kalyāṇavākkaraṇā')*, which enthused them to seek the Buddha's permission to stereotype the *'Buddhavacana'* by resorting to metrical devices such as rhyme and accent. This was an atttempt to bring the "*Buddha vachana* in its external form nearer the Vedic texts by introducing some rigidity and esoterism.

[1] All these are dialectical variants for the word 'bowl'.

parlance? In this case, monks, in different districts they know (the different words): *Pāti Patta Vittha Sarāva Dhāropa Poṇa Pisila*, yet although they know the word as this or that in these various districts a person does not cling to it but explains: 'These venerable ones definitely express it thus.' Thus, monks, is non-affectation of the dialect of the countryside and non-departure from recognised parlance."

— M. L. S. III 282

The value of the above exhortation would be greatly enhanced by the circumstance that herein the Buddha is describing one of the steps of the 'peaceful path' (*araṇapaṭipadā*) which he recommends for the monks. This path is contrasted with the 'war-like-path' (*saraṇapaṭipadā*), an instance of which can be seen in the above passage itself when it refers to the dogmatic and extremist attitude towards dialects The Ariyan disciple should avoid this latter, and should cultivate instead a moderate and tolerant attitude as regards the question of dialects. What inculcates in him such a liberal spirit, is the very dialectical implications behind the Parable of the Raft.

Sammā diṭṭhi (right view) may be regarded as unique among all forms of *diṭṭhis* owing to its peculiar dialectical element. A dramatic illustration of this unique character is reflected in the apparently drab and uninspiring opening of the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*. There we found Daṇḍapāṇi, the Sākyan, questioning the Buddha in order to ascertain the 'theory' he preached The Buddha's reply, which we have discussed earlier, was rather periphrastic. Daṇḍapāṇi would have expected, like most of us, to get a reply in the form of some short label of a dogma. He was, therefore, dissatisfied with the Buddha's reply which might have appeared to him as a piece of verbal *papañca*; and so he shook his confused head, raised his puzzled eye-brows, grimaced and went away. One might be tempted to show a similar response to the Buddha's reply if one fails to appreciate its deeper implications. The Buddha had no theory to be declared other than that he had put an end to all theories, and all proclivities towards them. His purpose as a teacher was to indicate the path to the same Goal that he has attained.

One of the most important among those suttas which afford us a deeper insight into the enlightened attitude towards concepts, is the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* — quite deservedly counted as the first in the *Majjhima Nikāya*. It portrays for us the 'Weltanschauung' of the following types of individuals.

I. *The uninstructed average person*, taking no account of the noble ones, unskilled in the dhamma of the noble ones, untrained in the dhamma of the noble ones taking no account of the good men, unskilled in the dhamma of the good men, untrained in the dhamma of the good men (*assutavā puthujjano ariyānaṁ adassāvī ariyadhammassa akovido ariyadhamme avinīto sappurisānaṁ adassāvī sappurisadhammassa akovido sappurisadhamme avinito*).

II. *The monk who is a learner*, not attained to perfection, but who lives striving for the incomparable security from bondage (*... ...bhikkhu sekho appattamānaso anuttaraṁ yogakkhemaṁ patthayamāno viharati*).

III. *The monk who is perfected* and free from cankers, who has lived the holy-life, done what was to be done, laid down the burden, attained his Goal, whose fetters of becoming are utterly worn away, who is freed by perfect profound knowledge (*......bhikkhu arahaṁ khīṇāsavo katakaraṇīyo ohitabhāro anupattasadattho parikkhīṇabhavasaññojano sammadaññā vimutto).*

IV. *The Tathāgata*, the perfected-one, fully self-awakened (*Tathāgato arahaṁ sammāsambuddho*).

Of these four types, the last two may be conveniently treated as one since their 'Weltanschauung' is the same, and thus we have here three basic types. In this sutta, the Buddha sets out to preach the 'fundamental mode of all phenomena' (*sabbadhammamūlapariyāyaṁ vo bhikkhave desesissāmi*) He enumerates a list of twenty four concepts and explains the attitude of the abovementioned individual types towards those concepts. The list includes the following: earth, fire, air, beings, devas, *Pajāpati*, *Brahmā*, the Radiant Ones, the Lustrous Ones, the *Vehapphala*

(Brahmas), the Overlord, the realm of infinite space, the realm of infinite consciousness, the realm of nothingness, the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, the seen, the heard, the sensed, the cognised, unity, diversity, universality, *Nibbāna* (*paṭhavī, āpo, tejo, vāyo bhūtā, devā, Pajāpati, Brahmā, Ābhassarā, Subhakiṇhā, Vehapphalā Abhibhū, Ākāsānañcāyatanaṁ, Viññāṇañcāyatanaṁ, Ākiñcaññāyatanaṁ, Nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṁ, diṭṭhaṁ, sutaṁ, mutaṁ, viññātaṁ, ekattaṁ, nānattaṁ, sabbaṁ, nibbānaṁ*).

For all the apparent diversity among these terms, they are all of a piece as 'concepts'. Now, the attitude of the uninstructed average person towards them is described thus:

Idha bhikkhave, assutavā puthujjano...... paṭhaviṁ paṭhavito sañjānāti, paṭhaviṁ paṭhavito saññatvā, paṭhaviṁ maññati, paṭhaviyā maññati, paṭhavito maññati', paṭhaviṁ meti maññati paṭhaviṁ abhinandati, taṁ kissa hetu, apariññātaṁ tassāti vadāmi.

Āpaṁ āpato............nibbānaṁ nibbānato.........

"Herein, monks an uninstructed average person.........cognises earth as earth; having cognised earth as earth, he imagines earth (as such), he imagines: 'on the earth'; he imagines: 'from the earth'; he imagines: 'earth is mine' He rejoices in earth. What is the reason for this? I say that it is not well comprehended by him." (The same repeated for 'water' down to '*nibbāna*'.)

The monk who is a 'learner' has the following attitude:

Yo pi so bhikkhave bhikkhu sekho ... so pi paṭhaviṁ paṭhavito abhijānāti, paṭhaviṁ paṭhavito abhiññāya paṭhaviṁ mā maññi, paṭhaviyā mā maññi paṭhavito mā maññi paṭhaviṁ meti mā maññi. paṭhaviṁ mā abhinandi, taṁ kissa hetu, pariññeyyaṁ tassā'ti vadāmi.

Āpaṁ āpato .... nibbānaṁ nibbānato ....

"Monks, whatever monk is a learner .... he understands through higher knowledge earth as earth; knowing earth as earth, let him not imagine earth (as such); let him not imagine: 'on the

earth'; let him not imagine: 'from the earth'; let him not imagine: 'earth is mine'; let him not rejoice in earth. What is the reason for this? I say it is because it should be well comprehended by him......"

The attitude of the Arahant and of the Tathāgata may be understood by the following passage (*mutatis mutandis*):

Yo pi so bhikkhave bhikkhu araham khīṇāsavo .... so pi pathaviṁ pathavito abhijānāti. pathaviṁ pathavito abhiññāya pathaviṁ na maññati. pathaviyā na maññati. pathavito na maññati, pathaviṁ me'ti na maññati, pathaviṁ nābhinandati, taṁ kissa hetu, pariññātaṁ tassāti vadāmi.........

Āpaṁ āpato ... nibbānaṁ nibbānato ....

"Monks, whatever monk is one perfected... ...he too understands through higher knowledge earth as earth: knowing earth as earth, he does not imagine earth (as such); he does not imagine: 'on the earth'; he does not imagine 'from the earth'; he does not imagine: 'earth is mine'; he does not rejoice in earth. What is the reason for this? I say it is because it has been well comprehended by him."

The average person uninstructed in the Dhamma, with mere sensory perception to guide him, cognises those twenty-four concepts as objects of thought Having so cognised, he proceeds to imagine in terms of them in accordance with the flexional pattern and delights in those concepts. This is because he lacks clear comprehension. He is misled by naive sense-experience and by his tendencies towards '*taṇhā-māna-diṭṭhi-papañca*'. Having evolved a concept, he proceeds to make it pliable and flexible He resorts to *inflexion* which is an elementary feature in language. By establishing a correspondence between the grammar of language and the grammar of nature, he sets about weaving networks of '*papañca*'. The monk who is earnestly training himself on the path to *Nibbāna* has a refined and higher

knowledge[1] of those concepts in accordance with the Dhamma. He therefore endeavours to refrain from egoistic imaginings based on the flexional pattern. Of him, it is said that he might gain comprehension by his training. The Arahants and the Tathāgata, who have intuitively gained the higher knowledge, are not beguiled by the flexional or grammatical patterns of concepts so as to indulge in egoistic imaginings. Theirs is the full comprehension.

Though the sutta makes no mention of the term '*papañca*', Buddhaghosa has rightly discerned its relevance to the sutta. Hence he draws attention to it thus:

Paṭhaviṁ paṭhavito saññatvāti so taṁ paṭhaviṁ evaṁ viparītasaññāya sañjānitvā; 'saññānidānā hi papañcasaṅkhā'ti vacanato aparabhāge thāmappattehi taṇhā māna diṭṭhipapañcehi idha maññanānāmena vuttehi maññati, kappeti, vikappeti, nānappakārato aññathā gaṇhāti. Tena vuttaṁ paṭhaviṁ maññatī'ti.

" 'Having cognised earth as earth' — this means that he (the average person), having thus cognised earth in the form of a perverted sense-impression, afterwards imagines, speculates, fabricates mentally and in diverse ways grasps it wrongly with the gross '*papañcas*' of craving, conceit and views (herein called *maññanā*), as it has been said '*saññānidānā hi papañcasaṁkhā*'."

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[1] As regards the distinction of meaning between '*abhijānāti*' and '*parijānāti*' in this context, reference may be made to the definition of the two terms *paññā* and *viññāṇa* given in the *Mahā Vedalla Sutta* (M. N I. 293): '*Yā cāvuso paññā yañca viññāṇaṁ imesaṁ dhammānaṁ saṁsaṭṭhānaṁ no visaṁsaṭṭhānaṁ, paññā bhāvetabbā viññāṇaṁ pariññeyyaṁ idaṁ nesaṁ nānākaraṇaṁ.*

"That which is intuitive wisdom, your reverence, and that which is discriminative consciousness among these states that are associated, not dissociated, intuitive wisdom is to be developed, discriminative consciousness is to be comprehended. This is the difference between them."

Buddhaghosa explains each of the different forms of *'maññanā'* given in the sutta with reference to one or more of the three *papañcas*. He is therefore somewhat puzzled at the concluding phrase *'paṭhaviṁ abhinandati'*, which he treats as a repetition. Observing that the Theras of Old (*Porāṇā*) have not given any explanation for this 'repetition', he ventures to give his own:

Paṭhaviṁ abhinandatī'ti vuttappakārameva paṭhaviṁ taṇhā diṭṭhīhi abhinandati assādeti parāmasati cāti vuttaṁ hoti. Paṭhaviṁ maññatīti eteneva etasmiṁ atthe siddhe kasmā evaṁ vuttanti ce? Avicāritametam Porāṇehi; ayaṁ pana me attano mati: desanāvilāsato vā ādīnavadassanato vā........ ...

" 'He rejoices in earth'—that is to say that he rejoices in, cherishes and clings to earth with *taṇhā*, *diṭṭhi* and the like, as it has been already explained. When the phrase 'he imagines earth (as such)' by itself conveys this sense, what is the justifica tion for the above phrase? This point has not been commented upon by the *Porāṇas*. This is my personal opinion: (The justification is) that it reflects the Buddha's discursive style in preaching or else emphasises the evil effects (of *maññanā*)."

The concluding phrase appears as a repetition because Buddhaghosa himself has explained the preceding forms of *maññanā* from the standpoint of *taṇhā-māna*-and *diṭṭhi-pāpañca*. But when we regard those four forms of *maññanā* as an illustration of the worldling's commitment to the grammatical structure, as we have indicated above, the problem of repetition or redundancy will not arise. On the contrary, the sutta would thereby gain in depth and significance. The aim of the Buddha in preaching this sutta is to point out the elementary modes in which all phenomena present themselves to the mind of the four individual types (*sabbadhammamūlapariyāyam*). The grammatical structure of the language is the most elementary mode of presentation. It is here that the concepts are invested with the necessary flexibility and set on their tracks to proliferate as *taṇha,-māna-* and *diṭṭhi-papañca*. The uninstructed average person succumbs to it; the disciple training on the Ariyan Path resists it; and the Emancipated One transcends it.

The commentary tells us that the immediate purpose for which the Buddha preached this sutta was to dispel the conceit of five hundred monks who were proud of their theoretical knowledge (*'pariyatti'*) of the Dhamma. It also says that their conceit was due largely to the fact that they were formerly Brahmins well-versed in the three Vedas. Although the sutta is not explicit as to the authenticity of this tradition, it is probably true, for the sutta ends with this unusual sentence: *'Idamavoca bhagavā. na te bhikkhū bhagavato bhāsitaṁ abhinandunti'* ('Thus spoke the Buddha, and those monks *did not* rejoice at his words'). In view of the fact that we hardly find any other sutta of this proportion which was not rejoiced over by the monks to whom it was specifically addressed, the commentarial tradition may be granted. As we have shown above, the sutta in fact exposes the nature of the totality of concepts and their syntactical relations Concepts - be they material or spiritual, worldly or transcendental - are not worthy of being grasped dogmatically. They are not to be treated as ultimate categories and are to be discarded in the course of the spiritual endeavour. If this is the true significance of the sutta, then there is no wonder that those conceited monks were crestfallen on hearing it. The commentary, however, tells us that they were displeased because they *did not* understand this abstruse discourse. On the contrary, we might say that they were displeased because they *did* understand the discourse. Hence it is not the abstrusness of the discourse that dispelled their conceit, as the commentary asserts, but it is the very *dialectical insinuations* underlying it that humbled them.[1] It is no doubt a

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[1] How tenaciously the Upanisadic soul-tradition clung to this flexional pattern, can be seen at Brh. 3.7.3. ff., where a list of concepts is so moulded in that pattern as to posit an Immortal Inner Controller.

"Yah prthivyāṁ tisṭhaṁ prthivyā antarah, yaṁ prthivī na ved yasya prthivī sarīraṁ, yah prthivīṁ antaro yamayati, esa ta ātmāntaryamṛtah."

"He who inhabits the earth, yet is within the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body the earth is, and who controls the earth from within - He is your Self, the Inner Controller, the

disquieting revelation to most of us and the immediate reaction cannot be a happy one. Even Buddhaghosa seems to have been rather reluctant to appreciate fully the implications of this sutta, and we have a curious hint as to this in his comment on the word '*nibbāna*' occurring as the last in the list of twenty-four concepts While commenting he hastens to add that '*nibbāna*' here refers only to the five heretical concepts of *Nibbāna*. This narrowing down of the meaning is obviously incongruous with the spirit of the sutta.[1] It, however, reflects a desperate attempt, on the part of the commentarial tradition, to salvage the orthodox concept of *Nibbāna*, so dear to our religious consciousness.[2] That the emancipated sage (*muni*) no longer clings even to such concepts as '*nibbana*' or 'detachment' (*virāga*) is clearly indicated in the following verse of the *Sutta Nipāta*:

Sīmātigo brāhmaṇo tassa natthi
ñatvā va disvā va samuggahītaṁ
na rāgarāgi na virāgaratto
tassīdha natthi param uggahītam.

— Vs. 795.

"For the Brahmin (the Muni) who has transcended all bounds, there is nothing that is grasped by knowing or by seeing. He is

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Immortal." The other concepts in that list are; water, fire, sky air, heaven, sun, quarters, moon and stars, space, darkness, light, beings, breath, speech, eye, ear, mind, skin, intellect, organ of generation. If the more or less parallel formulation in the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* is the Buddha's challenge to this Upanisadic doctrine in particular, the impact of the sutta on those 500 monks becomes all the more understandable. (See also, S. N. IV 21 ff)

The significance of this parallelism was pointed out to me by Ven. Nyāṇaponika Mahāthera

[1] See Keith. *Buddhist Philosophy in Indian and Ceylon*, p., 215.

[2] See '*Amatārammaṇakathā*' - Kvu. IX 2 pg. 401 f.

neither attached to attachment nor is he attached to detachment.[1] In this world, he has grasped nothing as the highest."

The *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* does not stand alone when it stresses the value of developing a detached attitude to all concepts, so that one can disown them without regrets when the occasion demands it. It was the burden of the *Alagaddūpama Sutta* which we have discussed above. It is also the moral that rings through the phrase: '*Sabbe dhammā nālaṁ abhinivesāya*' (M. N., I 255) (To render it simply: "*Nothing* is worth clinging to"). The theme comes up again in the following verse of the Dhammapada:

Sabbe dhammā anattā'ti
yadā paññāya passati
atha nibbindati dukkhe
esa maggo visuddhiyā

— Vs. 279.

"When one sees with insight that everything is not-self, then one finds no relish in all that is Ill. This is the path to purity."

Thus we arrive at the uncompromising position that as a concept '*Nibbāna*' is no more real or absolute than other concepts. It merely symbolises conceptually the transcendental experience in negative terms. All definitions of *Nibbāna* have validity only from the worldling's point of view and take the form of negations of various aspects of worldly existence either explicitly or implicitly.[2] Now, if the most predominant and pervasive characteristic of the world is prolific conceptualization, it follows that the transcendental experience of *Nibbāna* could be defined as the 'non-prolific' (*nippapañca*) or the cessation, the appeasement, of conceptual proliferation (*papañca-nirodha*; *papañca-vūpasama*). Hence it is that very often in those suttas

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[1] *Mahāniddesa* however explains '*rāgarattā*' as 'those attached to the five kinds of sense-pleasures' and '*virāgarattā*' as 'those who are attached to the attainments in the Realms of Form and Formless Realms.' (Nid. I, 100). See S. N. III 90.

[2] Thirty-three synonyms are given at S. N. IV 368ff (*Asaṁkhata Saṁy.*), *Nibbāna* being one of them.

which refer to the consciousness of the Arahants, we are baffled by a string of negations in some form or other. The consciousness of the Arahant is said to be so ineffable that even the gods and Brahmas are incapable of discovering its basis or support.[1] He has the ability to attain to a unique *samādhi*[2] in which he has no recourse to any of the data of sense experience normally considered essential for a *jhāna* or *samādhi*.

So neva paṭhaviṁ nissāya jhāyati, na āpaṁ nissāya jhāyati, na tejaṁ.... na vāyaṁ.... na ākāsānañcāyatanaṁ... na viññāṇañcāyatanaṁ.... na ākiñcaññāyatanaṁ.... na nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṁ.... na idhalokaṁ.... na paralokaṃ.... yampidaṁ diṭṭhaṁ sutaṃ mutaṁ viññātaṁ pattaṁ pariyesitaṁ anuvicaritaṁ manasā, tampi nissāya na jhāyati, jhāyati ca pana. Evaṁ jhāyiñca pana Sandha bhadraṁ purisājāniyaṁ sa-indā devā sabrahmakā sapajāpatikā ārakā'va namassanti.

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[1] *'Evaṃ vimuttacittaṁ kho bhikkhave bhikkhuṁ sa–indā devā sa-brahmakā sa-pajāpatikā anvesaṃ nādhigacchanti, 'idaṁ nissitaṁ tathāgatassa viññāṇan'ti. Taṁ kissa hetu? Diṭṭhevāhaṁ bhikkhave dhamme tathāgataṁ ananuvejjo'ti vadāmi.'*

— M N. I 140, *Alagaddūpama* S.

"Monks, when a monk's mind is freed thus, the devas — those with Indra, those with Brahma, those with *Pajāpati* — do not succeed in their search so as to conclude: 'It is on this that the consciousness of the Tathāgata depends.' What is the reason for this? I, monks, declare that a Tathāgata is untraceable here and now."

— M. L. S., I 179.

[2] Buddha called this *samādhi* *'aññā-phala'*, the 'Fruit of Knowledge' (A. N. IV 430); or *'Ānantarika'*, 'Immediacy' (Sn-226). Commentaries often refer to this as *'arahattaphala-samādhi.'* Cf. *'Samādhinā tena samo na vijjati'*, Sn. 226. 'A concentration like unto that, there is not.' See also ib. 225; D. N. II. 231 ff.; S. N. I. 18.

Namo te purisājañña — namo te purisuttama
yassa te nābhijānāma — yampi nissāya jhāyati.[1]

— A. N. V. 324-5

"He muses not dependent on earth, water, fire, air, the realm of infinity of space, the realm of infinity of consciousness, the realm of nothingness, the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; he muses not dependent on this world......on the world beyond. . . . on whatever is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after, traversed by the mind — dependent on all that he muses not, and yet he *does* muse. Moreover, Sandha, to him thus musing, the devas with Indra, with Brahma and with Pajāpati even from afar bow down, saying:

'We worship thee, thou thoroughbred of men,
We worship thee, most excellent of men.
For what it is whereon depending thou
Art musing — that we cannot comprehend'."

— G. S., V. 206

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[1] *Yesaṁ sannicayo natthi — ye pariññātabhojanā*
suññato animitto ca — vimokkho yesaṁgocaro
ākāseva sakuntānaṁ — gati tesaṁ durannayā.

— Dhp. 92

"To whom there are no accumulations, who have comprehended the nutriments, and whose range is the deliverance of the 'void' and the 'signless' — their track is hard to trace as that of the birds in the sky."

The commentary explains '*gati*' by citing various forms of possible *rebirth*, but the word does not necessarily refer to 'bourne'. Here the reference is not to the after-death state of Arahants, as is commonly supposed. It merely suggests the 'void' and 'signless' *range* (*gocara*) of movement or the extraordinary mental compass of the Arahants, which defies all definition.

Similar allusions to this transcendental consciousness are to be found in the verses No. 93, 179 and 180 (Dhp.).

The emphatic note with which it is said that although the Arahant has excluded from his mind all those possible objects of musing (or meditating), yet he *does* muse, is highly significant. In a number of thematic suttas[1] we find monks – notably Ānanda among them — questioning the Buddha and Sāriputta about the possibility of such a meditation. The question almost always smacks of doubt and wonderment "Could there be" — it runs — "such a *samādhi* in which a monk is neither conscious of earth nor of water . . . . and yet *is* conscious?"[2] And the reply is always, "There could be such a *samadhi* wherein a monk is neither conscious of earth nor of . . . . and *nevertheless is* conscious." A counter question follows as a rule: "In what manner and how, Lord, could there be. . . . ?". — in reply to which some indication as to the nature of the *samādhi* is given. For instance, we find the Venerable Sariputta declaring, in reply to Venerable Ānanda, that once he attained to such a *samādhi* when he was at the Andhavana, and he proceeds to explain it thus:

'Bhavanirodho nibbānaṁ, bhavanirodho nibbānan' ti kho me āvuso aññā va saññā uppajjati, aññā va saññā nirujjhati. Seyyathāpi āvuso sakalikaggissa jhāyamānassa aññā va acci uppajjati, aññā va acci nirujjhati, evameva kho me āvuso 'bhavanirodho nibbānaṁ bhavanirodho nibbānan'ti aññā va saññā uppajjati aññā va saññā nirujjhati, bhavanirodho nibbānaṁ saññī ca panahaṁ āvuso tasmiṁ samaye ahosin'ti

— A. N., V. 9f.

"One perception arose in me: 'Cessation of becoming is *Nibbāna*.' Another perception faded out in me: 'Cessation of becoming is *Nibbāna*'. Just as, your reverence from a fire of splinters, one flame arises and another flame fades out, even so in me one perception arose: 'Cessation of becoming is *Nibbāna*' and another perception faded out in me: 'Cessation of becoming

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1 A. N., IV 427, V 7,8,318,319,321.353ff.

2. The words '*saññī*' (conscious), '*jhāyati*' (meditates, muses), '*manasikaroti*' (pays attention to) are used more or less synonymously in these passages.

is *Nibbāna*.' Yet, at the same time your reverence, I consciously perceived."

— G. S., V. 7.

The unique feature of this *samādhi* is its very fluxional character. In it there is no such fixity as to justify a statement that it 'depends on' (*nissāya*) some object (*ārammaṇa*) as its support — hence the frustration of gods and men who seek out the basis of the Tathāgata's consciousness Normally, the *jhānas* are characterised by an element of fixity on which consciousness finds a footing or a steadying point (*viññāṇaṭṭhiti*). It is on this very fixity that the illusion of the ego thrives. In the above *jhāna* of the emancipated one, however, the ego has melted away in the fire of wisdom which sees the cosmic process of arising and cessation. Not only has the concept "I" (*papañca par excellence*) undergone combustion, but it has also ignited the data of sensory experience in their entirety. Thus in this *jhāna* of the Arahant, the world of concepts melts away in the intuitional bonfire of universal impermanence.[1]

This brings us to the classic phrase[2] which refers to the Buddha's attainment of wisdom (*paññā*) as a kind of illumination (*āloka*). It is often said that in that illumination the darkness of ignorance perished (*tamo vihato*). The concepts which we have concocted, and which are thus infested with varying degrees of substantiality or stability, cannot stand up to the radiance of wisdom. Hence they pale away and shrink into insignificance, as do twilight stars on the advent of the moon, or the moon at

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[1] Cf. '*avitakka-samādhi*', Ud. 71; '*avitakka-jhāyī*', S. N. I 126: '*avitakkaṃ-samāpanno*', *Sāriputta Thag*; '*jhāyati anupādano*', *Bhaddiya Thag*.; Sn. v. 7.

[2] "*Idaṁ dukkhaṁ ariyasaccan'ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṁ udapādi ñāṇaṁ udapādi paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi. āloko udapādi*". (S. N. V 422) – " 'This is the Noble Truth of Suffering' — thus, O monks, in regard to things unheard of in tradition, there arose in me the eye the insight, the wisdom, the knowledge, the *light*." "*Obhāsajātaṁ phalagaṁ cittaṁ*' – ' the mind 'lustre-become' and 'gone-to-Fruit' "; *Nandiya Thag*. (Thag. 1, 3. 5).

sunrise. Yet, in its lustre, wisdom supersede seven the sun, for the suttas tell us that even the latter pales before it:

Yattha āpo ca paṭhavī - tejo vāyo nagādhati
Na tattha sukkā jotanti - ādicco nappakāsati
Na tattha candimā bhāti - tamo tattha na vijjati
Yadā ca attanā vedi - muni monena brāhmaṇo
Atha rūpā arūpā ca - sukhadukkhā pamuccati.

— **Ud. 9**

"There, where earth, water, fire, and wind no footing find,
There are the stars not bright, nor is the sun resplendent,
No moon shines there, there is no darkness seen.
And then when he, the Arahant, has in his wisdom seen,
From well and ill, form and formless, is he freed."[1]

The above 'Verse of Uplift' (*Udāna*) occurring at the end of the *Bāhiya Sutta* was uttered by the Buddha with reference to Bāhiya who — as we saw above — met with a sudden death, having attained Arahantship. At the Buddha's behest, monks cremate his body and erect a cairn (*thūpa*) in honour of him, and at last question the Buddha regarding details of Bāhiya's rebirth. Then he revealed the fact that Bāhiya, being of mature wisdom, attained the goal with the minimum of instruction in the Dhamma. The verse quoted above which the Buddha thereupon utters is actually an inspired utterance of admiration at Bāhiya's unique feat and not a part of the Buddha's reply proper. The monks, when they raised that question, were not aware of the fact that Bāhiya died as an Arahant. Hence the above reply would have proved sufficient for them. These facts seem to have been overlooked by the commentator Dhammapāla who takes the verse to be a description of the actual '*anupādisesa nibbāna-dhātu*' ('*Nibbāna* with no clinging left'), as the destiny of Bāhiya after his death. He seems to imply that the Buddha is here elaborating on that aspect of *Nibbāna* in reply to those monks. Consequently, such terms as water, earth, fire, air, stars, sun, moon and darkness, assume a certain degree of grossness and banality in his interpretation. It is said that water, earth, fire, and air do not find a

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[1] See Introd. to *Kevaḍḍha Sutta* (Tr.) in D. B. I.

footing in that '*Nibbāna*-element,' and that neither the planets nor the mighty sun nor the charming moon appear therein to illuminate it. His explanation of the phrase 'there is no darkness seen' (*tamo tattha na vijjati*) exposes the inadequacy of his interpretation He asserts that the phrase serves to forestall a possible doubt that if all these luminary bodies were not there in that '*Nibbāna* element', it would be utterly dark like the purgatory. Now, to return to the imagery of the darkness of ignorance and the radiance of wisdom, we may say that it is precisely because there is no darkness (in the emancipated mind) that the stars, the sun and the moon *do not shine*. They have paled away,[1] their lustre having been superseded by the intuitional effulgence.[2] Be it noted that the three verbs used in connection with the stars, the sun and the moon, convey the sense that they do not *shine* there — not that they are physically non-existent in any mysterious realm beyond. Thus the allusion here, with its touch of imagery (a feature as apt as it is recurrent in such inspired verses), is most probably to that transcendental consciousness of the *living* Arahant in which the *concepts* such as earth, water, fire, and air, stars, sun, moon, darkness (of ignorance), realms of form and formless realms. happiness and unhappiness, have lost their 'substantiality' in more than one sense.

After what has been said above, we are now poised to examine the following much-vexed verse occurring in the *Kevaḍḍha Sutta* (D.N.)

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[1] The sense of 'fading away' or 'decolouration' implicit in the word '*virāga*' (detachment).

— See M. N. III. 240 ff., S. N. I. 235 III. 27; Itiv. 57.

[2] "Monks there are these four radiances (*pabhā*). What four? The radiance of the moon, the radiance of the sun, the radiance of fire, the radiance of wisdom. ......Monks, among these four, the radiance of wisdom (*paññā pabhā*) is indeed the most excellent.'

— A. N. II. 139 f. Also see S. N. I. 6.

Viññāṇaṁ anidassanaṁ - anantaṁ sabbato-pabhaṁ
Ettha āpo ca paṭhavī - tejo vāyo na gādhati
Ettha dīghañca rassañca- aṇuṁ thūlaṁ subhāsubhaṁ
Ettha nāmañca rūpañca - asesaṁ uparujjhati
Viññāṇassa nirodhena[1] *- etthetaṁ uparujjhati.*

D. N. I. 213

"Consciousness which is non-manifestative, endless, lustrous on all sides,
Here it is that earth and water, fire and wind, no footing find.
Here again are long and short, subtle and gross, pleasant and unpleasant
Name and form, all cut off without exceptions.
When consciousness comes to cease, these are held in check herein."

Here too some acquaintance with the context will be helpful. A monk conceives the riddle, "Wherein do these four great elements viz. earth, water, fire and air cease altogether?"[2], and in order to get a suitable answer, develops his psychic powers and goes from heaven to heaven querying gods and Brahmas in vain. At last he approaches the Buddha, and when the riddle is put to him, he remarks that it is not properly worded and therefore reformulates it thus, before giving his solution in the verse quoted above:

Kattha āpo ca paṭhavī - tejo vāyo na gādhati
Kattha dīghañca rassañca - aṇuṁ thūlaṁ subhāsubhaṁ
Kattha nāmañca rūpañca - asesaṁ uparujjhati?

"Where do earth and water, fire and wind, long and short, fine and coarse,
Pleasant and unpleasant, no footing find? Where is it that name and form
Are held in check with no trace left?"

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[1] Cf. A. N. I. 236; S. N. I. 35; Sn. v. 1037.

[2] *"Kattha nu kho ime cattāro mahābhūtā aparisesā nirujjhanti, seyyathīdaṁ paṭhavidhātu āpodhātu tejodhātu vāyodhātū' ti?"*

According to the Buddha's reply, earth, water, fire and air do not find a footing, and long, short, subtle, gross, pleasant' unpleasant and name and form are completely cut off in a consciousness *which makes nothing manifest*[1] and which is infinite and *lustrous all-round*.[2] It is very likely that the reference again

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[1] For this particular sense of the term *anidassana*, see *Kakacūpama S.* (*M. N. I. 127*): "*Ayaṁ hi bhante ākāso arūpī anidassano, tattha na sukaraṁ rūpaṁ likhituṁ rūpa-pātubhāvaṁ kātuṁ.*"

"This sky, Lord, is immaterial and *non illustrative*, it is not easy to paint a picture there or to *make manifest* pictures there."

Nidassana in its popular sense of 'illustration' means something that makes clear what is not already clear. Also see A. N. V. 61: *ummāpupphaṁ nīlaṁ nīlavaṇṇaṁ nīlanidassanaṁ nīlanibhāsaṁ*. "The flax flower, blue, blue coloured, *manifesting* blue, shining blue."

[2] The radiance of wisdom in its all-encompassing and penetrative aspects, which make it a vision and not a view.

A reference to a 'lustrous mind' is also found at A. N. I. 10:

Pabhassaraṁ idaṁ bhikkhave cittaṁ, tañca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhaṁ. Taṁ assutavā puthujjano yathābhūtaṁ nappajānāti. Tasmā assutavato puthujjanassa cittabhāvanā natthī'ti vadāmi. Pabhassaraṁ idaṁ bhikkhave ...... upakkilesehi vippamuttaṁ. Taṁ sutavā ariyasāvako yathābhūtaṁ pajānāti. Tasmā sutavato ariyasāvakassa cittabhāvanā atthī'ti vadāmi.

"This mind, monks, is luminous, but it is defiled by taints that come from without. But this the uninstructed manyfolk understand not as it really is, wherefore for the uninstructed manyfolk there is no cultivation of the mind, I declare. This mind, monks, is luminous, and it is cleansed of taints that come from without. This the instructed noble disciple understands as it really is. Wherefore, for the instructed noble disciple there is cultivation of the mind, I declare." — G. S., I. 8.

is to the *aññā-phala samādhi* (the 'Fruit-of-Knowledge' concentration) of the Arahant. Though less obvious, the string of negations is in general agreement with those that occur elsewhere in like contexts. Terms like long and short, subtle and gross, pleasant and unpleasant as well as name-and-form could easily be comprehended by the standard phrase 'whatever is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after and traversed by the mind'. The last line of the verse stresses the fact that the four great elements do not find a footing — and that name-and-form (comprehending them) can be cut off completely — in that *anidassana-viññāṇa* (the 'non-manifestative consciousness') of the Arahant, by the cessation of his normal consciousness which rests on the data of sense-experience. This is a corrective to that monk's notion that the four elements can *cease altogether*[1] somewhere — a notion which had its roots in the popular conception of self-existing material elements. The Buddha's reformulation of the original question and this concluding line are meant to combat this wrong notion. It must also be mentioned that the first and the last lines are basic in this verse (cp. question and answer) since they stress that it is in the *anidassana-viññāṇa* that a state of affairs similar to (though not identical with) the one envisaged by the question of that monk, could at all be expected. This consciousness of the Arahant is one that manifests nothing out of our world of concepts. It does not '*il-lustrate*'

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[1] In place of the verb '*nirujjhati*' in the original question, the Buddha makes use of the verb '*uparujjhati*'. Hence it seems that we have to distinguish between the meanings of these two. It is not improbable that '*nirujjhati*' conveys the sense of complete cessation (as in '*saññā-vedayita-nirodha*') whereas '*uparujjhati*' implies a 'holding-in-check' or a 'cutting-off'. This word would thus go well with the statement that the four elements do not find a footing (*na gādhati*) in the *jhānic* consciousness of the Arahant.

For this suggested sense of '*uparujjhati*' see *Mahā-Saccaka Sutta* (M. N.): "*So kho ahaṁ Aggivessana, mukhato ca nāsato ca assāsapassāsaṁ uparundhiṁ.*" — "And I, Aggivessana, cut off in breathing and out-breathing through the mouth and the nose."

(Lat. *lustro*, 'bright') anything *though* (or *because*) it is itself '*all-lustrous*,' for darkness can never be illustrated or made manifest by light.[1] With his penetrative insight[2] the Arahant sees *through* the concepts. Now, an object of perception (*ārammaṇa*) for the worldling is essentially something that is brought into focus — something he is looking *at*. For the Arahant, however, all concepts have become transparent to such a degree in that all-encompassing vision, that their boundaries together with their umbra and penumbra have yielded to the radiance of wisdom.[3] This, then, is the significance of the word '*anantaṁ*' (endless, infinite). Thus the paradoxically detached gaze of the contemplative sage as he looks *through* concepts is one which has no object (*ārammaṇa*) as the point of focus for the worldling to identify it with. It is a gaze that is neither conscious nor non-conscious,[4] neither attentive nor non-attentive[5], neither fixed nor not fixed[6] — a gaze that knows no horizon.[7]

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1. See A. N. II. 24f.
2. *nibbedhikā-paññā, paññā paṭivedha, aññāpaṭivedha* (*paṭi-vyadh*, 'to pierce')
3. Let this be an allusion to the three realms, *kāma* (sensuous), *rūpa* (fine-material) and *arūpa* (formless).
4. *na saññī assa, saññī ca pana assa.*
5. *na manasikareyya, manasi ca pana kareyya.*
6. *na jhāyati, jhāyati ca pana.*
7. (I) *Yassa jālinī visattikā - taṇhā natthi kuhiñci netave idaṁ buddham anantagocaraṁ - apadaṁ kena padena nessatha.*
   — Dhp. 180

   "By what track can you lead that Awakened One who is trackless and whose range is endless and to whom there is not that entangling net of craving to lead anywhere?"

   (II) *Duddasaṁ anantaṁ* nāma - na hi saccaṁ sudassanaṁ paṭividdhā taṇhā - jānato passato natthi kiñcanaṁ.*
   — Ud. 80

   (*vl. recognised by the Comm. P.T.S. prefers '*anattam*'.)

   "*Hard to see is the 'endless' - not easy 'tis to see the truth. Pierced through is craving - and naught for him who knows and sees.*"

The traditional interpretation as given by Buddhaghosa follows a different line altogether. To begin with, he presumes that the Buddha reformulated the question of that monk because the latter implied both the *organic* and the *inorganic* spheres by the terms earth, water, fire and air, whereas the question should — so he observes — legitimately refer only to the organic sphere. He therefore holds that the question as reformulated by the Buddha narrows down the field to the organic (. . . . *upādiṇṇaṁ yeva sandhāya pucchā*). This explanation does not appear plausible when we consider the fact that repeatedly in the suttas the Buddha and his disciples dissolve the dichotomy between the organic and the inorganic in matter.[1] How trivial the reformulated question becomes when Buddhaghosa's stipulation is granted can best be exemplified by quoting him.

'. .*Dīgharassan ti saṇṭhānavasena upādārūpaṁ vuttaṁ. Aṇuṁ thūlan'ti: khuddakaṁ vā mahantaṁ vā imināpi upādārūpe vaṇṇa mattameva kathitaṁ. Subhāsubhan'ti: subhañca asubhañca, upādārūpameva; kim pana upādārūpaṁ subhaṁ asubhan ti atthi? Natthi, iṭṭhāniṭṭhārammaṇaṁ pan'eva kathitaṁ. Nāmañca rūpañcāti: nāmañca dīghādibhedaṁ rūpañca* . . . .' — D. A. I.

" 'Long-short': derived matter in terms of (a person's) stature is meant here. 'Subtle-gross': small or big; by this too just the appearance of derived matter is implied. 'Pleasant-unpleasant': comely and ugly; derived matter again. Why? Is there anything called comely and ugly in the case of derived matter? No. Just the pleasant and unpleasant as objects (of perception) are meant. 'Name and form': name and the (physical) form of said description, viz., 'long', etc."

According to this explanation, the terms 'long' and 'short', 'pleasant' and 'unpleasant', refer to an individual's bodily

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[1] *Yā ceva kho pana ajjhattikā paṭhavidhātu, yā ca bāhirā paṭhavidhātu, paṭhavidhāturevesā. . . .*

— *Mahā Hatthipadopama S.* (*M. N.*)

"And whatever earth-element that is in oneself and whatever earth-element that is external to oneself, (in both cases) it is just the earth-element."

characteristics. '*Nāma*' is his name and '*rūpa*' is his body possessing the above characteristics. We need hardly point out that the significance of the question has failed to emerge in this explanation. But as we shall see presently, this explanation begs the question. The explanatory verse of the Buddha is now interpreted as an allusion to *Nibbāna* as the actual after-death destiny of the Arahant. The term '*viññāṇa*' is explained simply, though not convincingly, as *Nibbāna* in the sense 'that it-must-be-known' (*viññātabban'ti viññāṇaṁ*) and '*anidassanaṁ*' as that which cannot be illustrated by examples (*nidassanābhāvato*). '*Pabhaṁ*' is taken as a variant form of '*papaṁ*' (ford). Thus *sabbato-pabhaṁ* ('with fords all-round') connotes the accessibility of *Nibbāna* through any one of the thirty-eight objects of contemplation. '*Having arrived at*' this *Nibbāna* (*idaṁ nibbānaṁ āgamma*) all these organic manifestations of matter '*cease altogether. . . .*'[1] It should be now sufficiently clear that the narrowed down redefinition of the elements of matter has enabled Buddhaghosa to interpret the verse in this manner.

In the Brahma-nimantanika Sutta (**M. N.**) the first line of the above expository verse recurs in a manner which corroborates the interpretation we have advanced.

Viññāṇaṁ anidassanaṁ anantaṁ sabbato-pabhaṁ taṁ paṭhaviyā paṭhavittena ananubhūtaṁ, āpassa āpattena ananubhūtaṁ tejassa tejattena. . . . vāyassa vāyattena. . . . bhūtānaṁ. bhūtattena devānaṁ devattena . . .pajāpatissa pajāpatittena. . . . . .brahmānaṁ brahmattena. . . ābhassarānaṁ ābhassarattena ...subha-kiṇṇānaṁ subhakiṇṇattena . . . vehapphalānaṁ vehap phalattena . . . abhibhussa abhibhuttena. . . .sabbassa sabbattena ananubhūtaṁ.

"Consciousness which makes nothing manifest, infinite and all-lustrous; it does not partake of the extensity of earth, the cohesiveness of water, the hotness of fire, the movement of air, the creaturehood of creatures, the devahood of devas, the Pajāpatihood of *Pajāpati*, the Brahmahood of *Brahmā*, the radiance

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[1] Buddhaghosa does not make any distinction in sense between '*nirujjhati*' and '*uparujjhati*.' Thus he comments '*uparujjhatī'ti nirujjhati*.' — See fn. 1. p. 66.

of the Radiant Ones, the lustre of the Lustrous Ones, the Vehapphalahood of the Vehapphala-Brahmas, the Overlordship of the Overlord and the Allness of the All."

There can be little doubt that at least here we have to regard the list of terms beginning with the four great elements in an abstract sense as concepts.[1] In the commentary to this sutta, Buddhaghosa seems to have revised his interpretations to some extent. While sticking to his former rendering of the term '*viññāṇa*', he explains '*anidassana*' somewhat differently. "It *(Nibbāna)* is '*anidassana*' in the sense that it does not approach the range of visual consciousness" (*cakkhuviññāṇassa āpātham anupagamanato anidassanaṁ nāma*). Again, the word '*anantaṁ*' is rendered as in the *Kevaḍḍha Sutta*, but his comment on the expression '*sabbato-pabhaṁ*' shows an improvement here. Preference is given here to the implications of '*pabhā*' as lustre: "more lustrous than anything else,[2] since there is nothing more luminous or purer or whiter than *Nibbāna*." The second alternative meaning given is that "it is either the lord above everything or that it is not non-existing anywhere, for it should not be said that *Nibbāna* is not to be found in any one of the (four) quarters such as the east." The interpretation in terms of a ford is here relegated to the third and last place, whereas it was given the pride of place in the commentary to the *Kevaḍḍha Sutta*. The very fact that Buddhaghosa advanced alternative explanations to the above expression shows that he was in doubt as to its true significance. His lack of consistency, and the inherent defects in his explanations in this respect, are no less indicative of his doubts.

Two oft-quoted passages in the *Udāna*, over whose interpretation a wide divergence of opinion prevails, may now be taken up.

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[1] Note the similarity of this list to that found in the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* (M. N. 1). The *quality* referred to here probably corresponds to the first mode of *maññanā* (imagining), viz., *paṭhaviṁ maññati* ('imagines earth to be earth').

[2] '*sabbato pabhāsampannaṁ*' — This analysis of the compound to give a comparative sense is not very apt.

(I) *Atthi bhikkhave tad āyatanaṁ yattha neva paṭhavī na āpo na tejo na vāyo na ākāsānañcāyatanaṁ na viññāṇānañcāyatanaṁ na ākiñcaññāyatanaṁ na neva saññā-nāsaññāyatanaṁ, nāyam loko na paro loko, na ubho candimasuriyā. Tatra 'pāhaṁ bhikkhave neva āgatiṁ vadāmi, na gatiṁ, na ṭhitiṁ, na cutiṁ, na upapattiṁ, appatiṭṭhaṁ appavattaṁ anārammaṇam-evetaṁ esev' anto dukkhassā'ti.*

— Ud. 80

"There is, monks, that sphere wherein there is neither earth nor water nor fire nor air, wherein is neither the sphere of infinite space, nor that of infinite consciousness, nor that of nothingness, nor that of neither-perception nor-non-perception; wherein there is neither this world nor a world beyond, nor moon and sun. There, monks, I declare, is no coming, no going, no stopping, no passing away, no arising. It is not established, it continues not, it has no object. This, indeed, is the end of suffering."

(II) *Atthi bhikkhave ajātaṁ asaṇkhataṁ akataṁ asaṇkhataṁ. No c'etaṁ bhikkhave abhavissa ajātaṁ abhūtaṁ akataṁ asaṅkhataṁ na yidha jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṅkhatassa nissaraṇaṁ paññāyetha. Yasmā ca kho bhikkhave atthi ajātaṁ abhūtaṁ akataṁ asaṅkhataṁ tasmā jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṇkhatassa nissaraṇaṁ paññāyatī'ti.*[1]

— Ud. 80 f.; Itiv. 37.

"Monks, there is a not-born, a not-become, a not-made, a not-compounded. Monks, if that not-born. . . .were not, there

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[1] *Saṅkhata* denotes what is compounded, concocted or put together. In the last analysis, it is the *mind* that does this, through its conative activities impelled by the ego-illusion (*abhisaṅkhataṁ, abhisañcetayitaṁ*) The Arahant pacifies completely this tendency towards compounding and concocting (*sabbasamkhāra-samatha)*. Since herein *mind* is the maker, to see penetratively the made (*kata*) *as* made is to unmake it (*akata*), and to see penetratively the compounded (*saṅkhata) as* compounded is to de-compose it (*asaṇkhata*). Where there is no 'putting-together' or compounding afresh, there is no 'falling-apart' or decomposition, and thus the Arahant abides in the Uncompounded element (*asaṅkhata-dhātu*) which itself is the Deathless (*amata*).

Cf. *'saṅkhārānaṁ khayaṁ ñatvā akataññāsi brāhmaṇa'*. - Dhp. 383. "By knowing the destruction of formations, be thou O Brahmin, **one-who-knows-the-unmade.**"

would be no escape here from what is born, become, made, compounded. But since, monks, there is a not born . . . therefore there is an escape from what is born, become, made, compounded."

Both passages are presented as exhortations on *Nibbāna* with which the Buddha inspired the assemblage of monks. Both begin with an emphatic affirmative (*atthi*) and proceed in the form of a series of negations. While discussing the nature of *aññā-phala-samādhi* (the 'Fruit-of-Knowlege' Concentration) with the help of a specimen out of a number of thematic suttas, we have observed the note of diffidence and wonderment ringing through the questions. We have seen the emphatic tone characterising the replies. The paradox posed by that peculiar *samādhi* of the Arahant also came up for discussion. Hence the emphatic affirmative prefixed to these two sutta passages need not surprise us. As for the two series of negations in the respective passages, there does appear — *prima facie* — considerable divergence in formulation. We shall therefore examine them singly.

The former passage speaks, first of all, of an *āyatana* (sphere)[1] in which the four material elements, the four formless realms, this world, the world beyond, and the sun and moon are not found. We are now sufficiently familiar with such formulations to be able to identify them as referring to concepts and to resist the temptation to read into them any gross physical sense. It is further said that in this sphere there is neither coming nor going nor staying, neither dying nor being born. Here again we have a reference to abstract notions and not to actual facts implied by them. These notions are part and parcel of our phenomenal world of relative concepts, and come under the standard formula — 'whatever is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after and traversed by the mind.' The last three significant terms in the passage, viz, 'not established', 'not continuing', 'not having an object', are obvious allusions to the

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[1] Cf. " 'When shall I attain to and abide in that sphere (*tadāyatanaṃ*) which the noble ones now attain to and abide in?' Thus as he cherishes a desire for the incomparable deliverances (*anuttaresu vimokkhesu*), anxiety arises in him due to desire." — M. N. III. 218.

'paradoxical gaze' or the transcendental consciousness of the Arahant. These three terms (viz., *appatiṭṭhaṁ appavattaṁ anārammaṇaṁ*) correspond respectively to his threefold deliverance (*vimokkho*) — *suññato* (void), *appaṇihito* (free from longing) and *animitto* (signless).[1] Due to the penetrative vision of *paññā* (wisdom), concepts become transparent (*animitta* - 'signless') giving rise to utter detachment (*appaṇihita)* and the sage *real*-ises the voidness of the world (*suññata.*) It is in the 'light' of this transcendental vision that he declares — as the Buddha did — "Void is this world of anything that is self or of anything that belongs to self" (*suññam idaṁ attena vā attaniyena vā* — S. N. IV, 54).

The latter *Udāna* passage asserts that there is a state which is not-born, not become, not made and not compounded; for if there were no such state, there would be no possibility here of "step-pingout from the born, the become, the made and the compounded." This 'stepping-out' is effected *here and now (*Note: *idha* in the passage) in that emancipated mind of the Arahant,[2] to which the latter set of terms is inapplicable since all that is born, become,

[1] Cf. Dhp. 92, *Paṭis*. II 63.

[2] Neither of the two *Udāna* passages in question seems to refer to *saññā-vedayita-nirodha-samāpatti* (the attainment of cessation of perceptions and feelings) though in a sense it has an indirect connection with the *aññā-phala*. In the former, consciousness is in temporary abeyance, and since there is no ambiguity in regard to its content in terms of *saññā*, such negations as those we found in the first para. Will be superfluous. However, it does have a relevance to *aññā-phala-samādhi* as it is a prelude to the final 'stepping-out' effected through *paññā*. This fact would emerge from the following reference.

Saññāvedayitanirodhasamāpattiyā vuṭṭhitaṁ kho āvuso Visākha, bhikkhuṁ tayo phassā phusanti: suññato phasso animitto phasso appaṇihito phasso'ti. — M. N. I. 302, Cūla Vedalla S.

"Friend Visākha, when a monk *has emerged from* the attainment of the stopping of perception and feeling, three impingements assail him: impingement that is void, impingement that is signless, impingement that is undirected." — M. L. S., I 365.

made and compounded can be subsumed under that comprehensive formula to which reference has already been made. For a better appreciation of the note of emphasis in this passage, one may also consider the *Zeitgeist* at the advent of the Buddha. This was the time when the Indian mind imbued with yogic traditions found itself in a dilemma: '*to be conscious or not to be conscious*'.[1] The fact that even the most rarefied realms of sense-perception were not reliable was sometimes realised and the possibility of a way out of the network of *saññā* (perception) was a favourite subject of discussion at the assemblies of ascetic groups, as we are told in the *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta* (D. N.). Some religious teachers of renown like Pakkharasāti were scornfully sceptic about such a possibility among human beings (*Subha Sutta*, M. N.). Hence the fact that there *is* a break-through *here and now* needs all the emphasis it rightly deserves.[2]

The negative terms which often characterise the definitions of *Nibbāna* are significant of the detachment from all that is worldly and conditioned. It must be pointed out that whenever it is said that the five aggregates should be viewed as not-self, it primarily refers to those aggregates that are available for reflection to any *specific* individual. There can be considerable variation in the quality of the aggregates that any individual can

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[1] . . . *Saññā rogo, saññā gaṇḍo, saññā sallaṁ; asaññā sammoho. Etaṁ santaṁ etaṁ paṇītaṁ yadidaṁ neva-saññā-nāsaññāyatanan'ti* — M. N. (*Pañcattaya S.*)

"Perception is a disease, a boil, a dart, and absence of perception is delusion. This is peaceful, this is excellent, that is to say, the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception."

[2] . . . .*kāmānam etaṁ nissaraṇaṁ yadidaṁ nekkhammaṁ, rupānam etaṁ nissaraṇaṁ yadidaṁ āruppaṁ, yaṁ kho pana kiñci bhūtaṁ saṁkhataṁ paṭiccasamuppannaṁ nirodho tassa nissaraṇaṁ. Ima kho bhikkhave tisso nissaraṇiyā dhātuyo.* — Itiv., p. 61.

"Renunciation is the stepping-out from sense-pleasures, the formless is the stepping-out from the (realms of) form. But whatever there is that is become, compounded and conditionally arisen, cessation is the stepping-out from it. These, monks, are the three elements of stepping-out."

muster for developing the momentum required for utter detachment.[1] For instance, the aggregates reflected upon by one who makes the first *jhāna* his point of departure from *Samsāra* would be qualitatively different from those utilised by another with the second *jhāna.* As the canonical simile[2] goes, even as an archer or his apprentice first practises on a straw-dummy or on a tablet of clay and afterwards, when he has mastered the art, shoots even long distances, renting asunder big objects by the flash of lightning, even so the aspirant practises detachment on his set of aggregates reflecting upon their impermanent, sorrow-fraught, not-self character, and thereafter *aims* at the 'Deathless Element' with the aid of a convenient phrase suggestive of the very antithesis of his present predicament. This is why the synonyms for *Nibbāna*, either explicitly or implicitly, connote the negation of worldly imperfections. The words and the phrases used serve as a *target* for his supreme detachment — a target which he does not *grasp* but *pierces through* with the arrow of wisdom.

The monk who succeeds in detaching his mind from his present set of aggregates and aims at complete detachment which is the 'Deathless Element' or *Nibbāna,* has one more hurdle to clear — a subtle one at that. Unless he looks sharp and keeps to the moral of the Parable of the Raft, he can sometimes conceive attachment (*rāga*) or delight (*nandi*) for those very concepts which he utilises to attain *Nibbāna.* It is as if he were to hold on to the overhanging creeper with which he leaped across the stream, even when he is well above the further bank.[3] The creeper hangs down from a tree on the hither bank, hence unless he 'lets go' the firm hold with which he had 'grasped' it, he will oscillate back again. Luckily for him, however, the *Anāgāmin* ('Non-Returner') true to his name, has developed his mind to that point

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[1] Eleven basic types are given at A. N. V. 346; *Aṭṭhakanāgara S.* (M. N.). See also *Āneñjasappāya S.* (M. N.)

[2] A. N. IV 243.

[3] A simile used by Buddhaghosa (Vism. XXII), though its implications do not seem to have been fully appreciated.

For an illustration of the *Anāgāmin's* subtle attachment see S. N. III. 126 ff. (*Khema S.*),

of 'No-Return' (*anāvattidhammo)* where although he may hesitate for a brief while until the tension (*saṅkhārā*) ends, he lets go his hold before the creeper can swing him back again. To echo the exclamation of Ānanda in the *Āneñjasappāya Sutta* (M. N.): "Marvellous is it, O Lord, extraordinary is it, O Lord, that the Lord, the Exalted One, has preached to us the crossing of the flood by relative dependence." (*Acchariyaṁ bhante abbhutaṁ bhante! Nissāya nissāya kira no bhagavatā oghassa nittharaṇā akkhātā.*)

The Noble Disciple's humble aspiration as he fares on the Noble Eightfold Path is: "Surely, there must be an end to this *entire*. mass of suffering!"[1] When he says 'entire,' he means 'entire.' He knows full well that even the concept or concepts which he provisionally takes hold of — all rafts, targets and creepers — are not worth clinging to once they have served their purpose. Hence he entertains no qualms concerning any form of absolute eternal existence, however subtle it may be. He puts an end to this entire mass of suffering at the price of all attachments gross or subtle (*anupādāparinibbāna*).[2] That done, his task is done (*kataṁ karaṇīyaṁ*).

Papañca and the Doctrine of Paṭicca-Samuppāda

The analysis of the problem of bondage and release in terms of concepts derives its validity from the fact that the possibility of liberation *here and now* is essentially dependent on our success in breaking down the vital nexus of egoistic attachment between the mutually interdependent consciousness on the one hand and name-and-form on the other. We are told that their interdependence is similar to that of two standing bundles of reeds which are mutually supported at the top, so that should one be drawn the other must necessarily fall down. This mutual dependence between them, as well as their relevance to the

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[1] *Appeva nāma imassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa antakiriyā paññāyetha.* (Itiv., p. 89)

[2] *'Nāññatra sabbanissagga-sotthiṁ passāmi pāṇinaṁ'* — S. N. I. 53. "Save by their renouncing all, no weal for beings do I behold."

problem of concepts, will be borne out by the following sutta passages.

(I) *Seyyathāpi āvuso dve naḷakalāpiyo aññamaññaṁ nissāya tiṭṭheyyuṁ evameva kho nāmarūpapaccayā viññāṇaṁ viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṁ nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanaṁ saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso phassapaccayā vedanā vedanāpaccayā taṇhā taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṁ upādānapaccayā bhavo bhava-paccayā jāti jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṁ sokaparidevadukkha-domanassupāyāsā sambhavanti. Evam etassa kevalassa duk-khakkhandhassa samudayo hoti. Tesañce āvuso naḷakalāpīnaṁ ekaṁ ākaḍḍheyya ekā papateyya, aparañce ākaḍḍheyya aparā papateyya. Evam eva kho āvuso nāmarūpanirodhā viññāṇa-nirodho, viññāṇanirodhā nāmarūpanirodho nāmarūpanirodhā saḷāyatananirodho...Evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti.* — S. N. II. 114.

'Just as if, friend, two bundles of reeds were to stand one supporting the other, even so consciousness is dependent on name-and-form, and name and-form is dependent on conscious-ness, and the six spheres of sense on name-and-form, contact on the six spheres, feeling on contact, craving on feeling, grasping on craving, becoming on grasping, birth on becoming, and old-age, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, unhappiness and despair are dependent on birth. Thus is the arising of this entire mass of suffering. But, friend, if one of those two bundles of reeds is drawn out, the other one would fall down, and if the latter is drawn, the former one will fall down. Even so, friend, with the cessation of name-and-form, consciousness ceases, with the cessation of consciousness, name-and-form ceases, with the cessation of name-and-form, the six sense-spheres cease. . . .Thus comes to be the cessation of this entire mass of suffering."

(II) *Paccudāvattati kho idaṁ viññāṇaṁ nāmarūpamhā nāparaṁ gacchati. Ettāvatā jāyetha vā jīyetha vā mīyetha vā cavetha vā uppajjetha vā, yadidaṁ nāmarūpapaccayā viññāṇaṁ viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṁ nāmarūpa-paccayā saḷāyatanaṁ... Evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti.*

— D. N. II. 32 (*Mahāpadāna* S.)

"This consciousness turns back from name-and-form, it does not go beyond. In so far can one be born or grow old or die or pass away or reappear, in so far as this is, to wit, consciousness is dependent on name-and-form, name-and-form on consciousness, the six sense spheres on name-and-form. . . . Thus comes to be the arising of this entire mass of suffering."

(III) *Ettāvatā kho Ānanda jāyetha vā jīyetha vā mīyetha vā cavetha vā uppajjetha vā, ettāvatā adhivacanapatho, ettāvatā niruttipatho, ettāvatā paññattipatho, ettāvatā paññāvacaraṁ, ettāvatā vaṭṭaṁ vaṭṭati itthattaṁ paññāpanāya, yadidaṁ nāma-rūpaṁ saha viññāṇena*[1].

— D. N. II. 63f. (*Mahā-nidāna* S.)

"In so far only, Ānanda, can one be born, or grow old, or die, pass away or reappear, in so far only is there any pathway for verbal expression, in so far only is there any pathway for terminology, in so far only is there any pathway for designations, in so far only is there any sphere of knowledge, in so far only is the round (of *saṁsāric* life) kept going for there to be any designation of the conditions of this existence."[2]

— D. B., II. 61

The interdependence between *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa* in the case of the worldling is such that the one turns back from the other (*paccudāvattati*) refusing to go further (*nāparaṁ gacchati*). This is the vortex proper of all *saṁsāric* currents (*ettāvatā vaṭṭaṁ vaṭṭati*) which sooner or later engulfed all pre-Buddhist attempts at crossing the fourfold flood.[3] Hence a permanent solution had to be effected at this very vortex, and an approach to the seething mass was rendered possible by the fact that all pathways of *concepts* and *designations* converged on it, providing sufficient

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[1] The commentary glosses over the key terms in this passage, with little attempt to draw out their deeper implications.

[2] T. W. and C. A F. Rhys Davids, however, have sensed the importance of this passage when they remark: "The little paragraph contains a great part of modern psychology in the germ state." — D. B., II. 61 fn. 2

[3] *kāma* (sense-desire), *bhava* (becoming), *diṭṭhi* (view), *avijjā* (ignorance).

scope for wisdom to work its way through (*ettāvatā paññāvacaraṁ*). Perfect Wisdom, however, could not be ushered in until all tendrils of *saṁkhārā* feeding on ignorance (*avijjā*) have been torn asunder. This difficult feat the Buddha accomplished, thereby extirpating all craving,[1] and thus there broke upon his enlightened mind the relevance of the two links '*avijjā*' and '*saṁkhārā*' to the vicious cycle of rebirth. The almost inseparable nexus of attachment between consciousness and 'name-and-form' was severed[2] and the sage found refuge in that *anidassana viññāṇa* wherefrom all currents turn back, and wherein the vortex holds no sway.[3]

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[1] '*visaṁkhāragataṁ cittaṁ-taṇhānaṁ khayam ajjhagā.*' — Dhp. 154.

[2] *Pahāsi saṅkhaṁ - na ca mānam ajjhagā*
acchecchi taṅhaṁ - idhā nāmarūpe
taṁ chinnaganthaṁ - anighaṁ nirāsaṁ
pariyesamānā nājjhagamuṁ
devā manussā idha vā huraṁ vā
saggesu vā sabbanivesanesu. — S. N. I. 12
"He cast out reckoning, no measuring he found,
Craving he cut off, in his name - and - form.
That bond-free one, from blemish and longing free,
Him, no gods or men in their search could ken,
Here or in worlds beyond, in heavens or in all abodes."

Kuto sarā nivattanti - kattha vaṭṭaṁ na vaṭṭati
kattha nāmañca rūpañca - asesaṁ uparujjhati
yattha āpo ca paṭhavī - tejo vāyo na gādhati
ato sarā nivattanti - ettha vaṭṭaṁ na vaṭṭati
ettha nāmañca rupañca - asesaṁ uparujjhati - ib. 12.
"Wherefrom do currents turn back - where whirls no more the whirlpool?
Wherein are name-and-form held in check with no trace left?
And where do earth and water-fire and air, no footing find?
Hence do all currents turn back, here whirls no more the whirlpool.
Here it is that name-and-form are held in check with no trace left."
Cf. Ud. 75; Dhp. v. 25; M. N. III. 239.

The above-mentioned interdependence between *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa* was a corollary of the mutual dependence between *nāma* and *rūpa* in their Buddhistic sense.[1] 'Form' (*rūpa*) can secure a basis in consciousness only in collaboration with 'name' (*nāma*)[2] and this is where the concept comes in. Though matter, in its gross conventional sense, cannot be completely transcended so long as one's physical body is there, 'name-and-form' as the concept of matter can be dissolved or melted away

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[1] *Yehi Ānanda ākārehi yehi liṅgehi yehi nimittehi yehi uddesehi nāmakāyassa paññatti hoti, tesu ākāresu tesu liṅgesu tesu nimittesu tesu uddesesu asati, api nu kho rūpakāye adhivacana-samphasso paññāyethā'ti? — No hetaṁ bhante. — Yehi Ānanda ākārehi. . . rūpakāyassa paññatti, tesu ākāresu. . . . asati, api nu kho nāmakāye paṭighasamphasso paññāyethā'ti?— No hetaṁ bhante. — Yehi Ānanda ākārehi. . . .nāmakāyassa ca rūpakāyassa ca paññatti hoti, tesu ākāresu. . . .asati, api nu kho adhivacanasamphasso vā paṭighasamphasso vā paññāyethā, ti? — No hetaṁ bhante.*

— D. N.: II. 62 (*Mahā-nidāna S.*)

"Those modes, features, characters, exponents by which the aggregate called 'name' is designated — if all these were absent would there be any manifestation of a corresponding verbal impression in the aggregate called '(bodily) form'?" — "There would not, Lord." — "Those modes, features, characters, exponents by which the aggregate called '(bodily) form' is designated — if all these were absent would there be any manifestation of an impression of sense-reaction in the aggregate called 'name'?" — "There would not, Lord." — "And if all those modes. . of both kinds were absent would there be any manifestation of either verbal or sensory impression?" — "There would not, Lord."

[2] *Vedanā saññā cetanā phasso manasikāro, idaṁ vuccatāvuso nāmaṁ. Cattāri ca mahābhūtāni catunnañca mahābhūtānaṁ upādāya rūpaṁ, idaṁ vuccatāvuso rūpaṁ* — M. N., *Sammā-diṭṭhi S.*

"Feeling, perception, conation, contact, attention — these, brethren, are called 'name'. The four great elements and the matter derived from them — these, brethren, are called 'form'."

through wisdom, as was done by the Buddha and the Arahants. The concept is what it is due to some kind of crystallization or fabrication, and this is brought about by the 'fermenting-agent' — the '*āsavas*' (influxes, cankers) as they are called. The darkness of ignorance (*avijjā*) is leavened, as it were, by this ferment (*āsava*).[1] Now, one of the most regular phrases that accompany the declaration of the attainment of emancipation is: "Having seen through wisdom, his cankers are made extinct" (*paññāya c'assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti*). Once the fermenting-agent is thus destroyed, concepts in the strict sense of the term cannot occur in the emancipated mind (v. supra, p. 26), though he may think and speak with the help of worldly concepts. Since the cankers which agglutinate the concept are no more, the Arahant can render concepts non-manifest (*anidassana*) in his *jhānic* consciousness with as much ease as (to use the relevant canonical simile) a man whose hands and feet are cut off, reflects and knows that he has lost his limbs (*Sandaka S.*: M. N , I.523).It may also be added that it is this fermenting-agent which — in its dynamic manifestations as *saṃkhāras* — is instrumental in graphically presenting before the consciousness of a dying individual that concept or percept[2] which serves as a *footing* for his rebirth The process of crystallization that follows is not essentially different from the process whereby an idea becomes an artifact at the hands of a craftsman, due to grasping and moulding. The traditional simile of the potter is not yet obsolete.[3] His grasping and moulding of the raw-material is but the outward manifestation of his grasp on the concept of a pot. Once he loses his grasp on the latter — that is, once the concept loses its reality for him —he will automatically lose interest in the moulding of that idea and no pot will result.

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[1] *Āsavasamudayā avijjāsamudayo, āsavanirodhā avijjānirodho.*- M. N., I.154 (*Sammādiṭṭhi S.*) —

"With the arising of cankers there is the arising of ignorance, with the cessation of cankers there is the cessation of ignorance."

[2] Any sign or symbol, not necessarily a linguistic one. Even the bare 'latency' (*anusaya*) is sufficient. See S. N. III. 105.

[3] Compare the simile of the painter at S. N. III. 151.

Similarly, when concepts have lost their *fecundity* for an individual, they will never fertilize or proliferate into any kind of rebirth. As we saw above, the consciousness of the Buddha and Arahants manifests nothing (*anidassana*) and is devoid of that dynamic ferment (*khīṇabīja; visaṁkhāragataṁ cittaṁ*). Hence it is that they pass away with a consciousness which is unestablished (*appatiṭṭhita-viññāṇa* — S.N., I. 122). In other words, their consciousness comes to an end (*viññāṇam attham agamā* — Ud. 93).

In order the better to appreciate the above solution of the Buddha to the problem of suffering, we may briefly contrast it with the pre-Buddhistic attempts at release. These attempts, as a rule, were inspired by a false dichotomy between 'mind' and 'matter' In search of a way out, they either pitted mind against matter (self mortification, *attakilamathānuyoga*) or set matter against mind (self-indulgence, *kāmasukhallikānuyoga*). In the former case, the yogins found themselves in a spiritual *cul-de-sac* with the dilemma — 'to be conscious or not to be conscious' and the most they could do was to develop the *jhāna* of 'neither-perception-nor-non-perception.' In the latter case, it was simply a question of 'to be or not to be.' The former could not extricate themselves out of even the most subtle *jhānic* experience possible at the worldly level, because they developed an attachment to it, and hence they found themselves reappearing in the formless realms (*arūpa loka*). The latter, due to their materialistic disregard for all ethics in their gross indulgence, found themselves repeatedly shackled to lower realms of sensuality (*kāmaloka*) The one 'lagged behind' obsessed with the concept of a metaphysical soul, whereas the other 'over-reached' himslf owing to his narcissistic attachment to his body.[1] In either case whither they *inclined* thither they fell, yet what they sought, that they did not find. The reason was that they were led by *inclinations* amassed through their bodily, verbal and mental activities (*kāya-*

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1 "Obsessed by two views, O monks, do some gods and men lag behind (*oliyanti*) while yet others over-reach themselves (*atidhāvanti*). Only they do see that have eyes to see." — Itiv. 43.

vacī-mano-saṁkhāra) in their ethical manifestations as the 'meritorious,' the 'demeritorious' and the 'imperturbable' (*puñña-apuñña-āneñjābhi saṁkhāra*). With their triple *papañca* they created their own 'worlds' and found themselves thrown into them.

When viewed against this background, we see that the Buddha's solution to the problem of 'escape from the *world* of suffering' was based on a restatement of the whole problem. His vision into the universal law of Dependent Arising with its three corollaries of impermanence, suffering and not-self exposed the fallacy of the rigid dichotomy between mind and matter. He realised the conditioned, phenomenal nature of the world, which necessitated a redefinition of the concept of the world. Thus he declared that in the terminology (lit. 'discipline') of the Noble Ones (*ariyassa vinaye*) the 'world' is indistinguishable from the concept thereof.

(I) "That by which one is conscious of the world, by which one has conceit of the world — that is called 'world' in the Noble One's discipline. And through what is one conscious of the world? Through what has one conceit of the world? Through the eye, friends, through the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind . . . . " — S. N. IV. 95

(II) "That end of the world wherein one is not born, does not grow old or die, pass away or reappear, that I declare, is impossible to be known, seen or reached by travelling. But, friend, I do not declare that one can make an end of suffering without reaching the end of the world. Friend, I do proclaim that in this very fathom-long body, with its perceptions and consciousness, is the world, the world's arising, the world's cessation and the path leading to the world's cessation."
— A. N. II. 48

(III) " 'The world, the world.' O Lord, they call it. In what sense, O Lord, is there a world or a concept of a world?"

"Wherever, Samiddhi, there is the eye, the visible forms, the visual consciousness and the things perceptible with the visual

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[1] Cf. M. N. I. 112. (*Madhupiṇḍika S*)

consciousness, there is the world or the concept of it. .Wherever there is the ear . . . . nose . . . . tongue . . . . body . . . . mind.

"Wherever, Samiddhi, there is no eye, no visible forms, no visual consciousness and nothing perceptible with the visual consciousness, there is neither a world nor a concept of a world. . . . Wherever there is no ear . . . . nose . . . . tongue . . . . body . . . . mind . . . ."[1] — S N. IV. 39-40

Thus the world is what our senses present it us to be. However, the world is not purely a projection of the mind in the sense of a thoroughgoing idealism;[1] only, it is a phenomenon which the empirical consciousness cannot get behind, as it is itself committed to it. One might, of course, transcend the empirical consciousness and see the world objectively in the light of *paññā* only to find that it is void (*suñña*) of the very characteristics which made it a 'world' for oneself.

To those who are complacently perched on their cosy conceptual superstructures regarding the world, there is no more staggering a revelation than to be told that the world is a void. They might recoil from the thought of being plunged into the abysmal depths of a void where concepts are no more. But one need not panic, for the descent to those depths is gradual and collateral with rewarding personal experience. Hence the three significant terms in Buddhist ethics, *anupubbasikkhā*, *anupubbakiriyā*, *anupubbapaṭipadā* ('gradual training, gradual doing, gradual practice').[2] One can, therefore, without inhibition, make use of the conceptual tools at his command in his spiritual endeavours—only he must sharpen them, and continue to sharpen them, until they wear themselves out in the process of use.[3] He has to be guided by the twin principles of relativity and pragmatism. The spiritual training in Buddhism is broad-based on the most elementary fact of experience – *dukkha*. It proceeds on

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[1] It seems that the necessary precaution has been taken in the above *Samiddhi Sutta* itself In addition to the three factors, the eye, the visible forms and the visual consciousness, it refers to a fourth, i. e. 'things perceptible with visual consciousness.'

[2] M. N. I. 479, M. N. III. 1 ff.

[3] See M. N. I. 411 *(Apaṇṇaka S.)*.

and culminates in experience. Experience is itself the ultimate criterion of truth and not its predicability. Yet, from the worldling's point of view, predicability is of the very essence of truth.

Akkheyyasaññino sattā – akkheyyasmiṁ patiṭṭhitā
akkheyye apariññāya – yogaṁ āyanti maccuno
akkheyyañca pariññāya – akkhātāraṁ na maññati
taṁ hi tassa na hotīti – yena naṁ vajju taṁ tassa natthi.
— S. N. I. 11

"Men, aware alone of what is told by names,
Take up their stands on what is expressed.
If this, they have not rightly understood,
They go their ways under the yoke of Death.
He who has understood what is expressed,
He fancies not, as to 'one who speaks'.
Unto him such things do not occur,
And that by which others may know him
That, for him, exists not."
— K. S. I. 16 ff.

Thus the worldling is at the mercy of concepts,[1] but still the Buddha shows how he can make the best out of a bad situation. He can make use of the concepts themselves to develop insight into the emptiness of concepts. What is necessary is a Middle Path between the extreme views of existence and non-existence. According to the Buddha, the worldling, for the most part, rests on the verbal dichotomy of existence and non-existence. In the light of wisdom both these extremes are proved false:

Dvayanissito khvāyam Kaccāyana loko yebhuyyena, atthitañceva natthitañca. Lokasamudayaṁ kho Kaccāyana yathābhūtaṁ sammappaññāya passato yā loke natthitā sā na hoti. Lokanirodhaṁ kho Kaccāyana. . . yā loke atthitā sā na hoti.

Upāyupādānābhinivesavinibandho khvāyam Kaccāyana loko yebhuyyena. Tañcāyaṁ upāyupādānaṁ cetaso adhiṭṭhānaṁ

[1] *Nāmaṁ sabbaṁ addhabhavi – nāmā bhīyo na vijjati*
nāmassa ekadhammassa – sabbeva vasamanvagu. — S. N. I. 39
"Name has soiled everything, higher than name there's none;
To name — to this one thing — is subject everyone."

abhinivesānusayaṁ na upeti na upādiyati nādhiṭṭhāti attā meti. Dukkhameva uppajjamānaṁ uppajjati, dukkhaṁ nirujjhamānaṁ nirujjhatīti na kaṁkhati na vicikicchati aparappaccayā ñāṇamevassa ettha hoti. Ettāvatā kho Kaccāyana sammā diṭṭhi hoti.

Sabbaṁ atthīti kho Kaccāyana ayaṁ eko anto, sabbaṁ natthīti ayaṁ dutiyo anto.

Ete te ubho ante anupagamma majjhena Tathāgato dhammaṁ deseti avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā. . . .

— S. N. II. 17

"This world, Kaccāyana, usually bases (its views) on two things, on existence and non-existence.

"Now he who with right insight sees the uprising of the world as it really is, does not hold with the non-existence of the world. And he who with right insight sees the passing away of the world as it really is, does not hold with the existence of the world.

"The world, for the most part, is given to approaching, grasping, entering into and getting entangled (as regards views). Whoever does not approach, grasp, and take his stand upon that proclivity towards clinging, approaching and grasping, that mental standpoint, namely the thought: 'This is my soul'; he knows that what arises is just Ill and what ceases is just Ill. Thus he is not in doubt, is not perplexed and herein he has knowledge that is not merely another's. Thus far, Kaccāyana, he has right view.

" 'Everything exists' — this is one extreme. 'Nothing exists' — this is the other extreme. Not approaching either of those extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Doctrine by the middle-way: 'Conditioned by ignorance volitional activities come to pass. . . .' "

— K. S. II. 12

In conceptual terms this Middle Path would mean that there is an arising (*uppāda*), a passing away (*vaya*) and an otherwiseness in persistence (*ṭhitassa aññathatta*) of phenomena. It might even be summed up in paradoxical terms as a series of intermittent

'arisings' and 'passings away' with nothing that arises and passes away — a flux of becoming (*bhavasota*). But this is as far as concepts go, and the rest has to be accomplished through intuitive wisdom. The primary significance of the formula of Dependent Arising lies here. Lists of phenomena, both mental and material, are linked together with the term '*paccayā*' or any of its equivalents,[1] and the fact of their conditionality and non-substantiality is emphasised with the help of analysis and synthesis. Apart from serving the immediate purpose of their specific application, these formulas help us to *attune* our minds in order to gain *paññā*. Neither the words in these formulas, nor the formulas as such, are to be regarded as ultimate categories. We have to look not so much *at* them as *through* them. We must not miss the wood for the trees by dogmatically clinging to the words in the formulas as being ultimate categories. As concepts, they are merely the modes in which the flux of material and mental life has been arrested and split up in the realm of ideation, as for instance in the case of milk, curd, butter and ghee.[2] From the worldling's point of view, they are infested

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[1] Such as *hetu*, *nidāna*, *samudaya* *pabhava*. *upanisā*.

[2] *Seyyathāpi Citta gavā khīraṁ, khīramhā dadhi, dadhimhā navanītaṁ, navanītamhā sappi, sappimhā sappimaṇḍo; yasmiṁ samaye khīraṁ hoti neva tasmiṁ samaye dadhīti saṁkhaṁ gacchati, na navanītanti saṁkhaṁ gacchati, na sappīti. . . . na sappimaṇḍoti . . khīrantveva tasmiṁ samaye saṁkhaṁ gacchati; yasmiṁ samaye dadhi hoti. . . . navanītaṁ hoti. . . .sappi hoti . . sappimaṇḍo hoti neva tasmiṁ samaye khīranti saṁkhaṁ gacchati, na dadhīti. . . . na navanītanti. . . . na sappīti . . .sappimaṇḍotveva tasmiṁ samaye saṁkhaṁ gacchati. Evameva kho Citta yasmiṁ samaye oḷāriko attapaṭilābho hoti - pe - Yasmiṁ Citta samaye arūpo attapaṭilābho hoti, neva tasmiṁ samaye oḷāriko attapaṭilābhoti saṁkhaṁ gacchati, na manomayo attapaṭilābhoti saṁkhaṁ gacchati, arūpo attapaṭilābhotveva tasmiṁ samaye saṁkhaṁ gacchati. Imā kho Citta lokasamaññā lokaniruttiyo lokavohārā lokapaññattiyo yāhi Tathāgato voharati aparāmasanti.*

— D. N. I. 202

"Just, Citta, as from a cow comes milk, and from milk curds, and from curds butter, and from the butter ghee, and

with the problems of identity and difference, which tend to resolve themselves into extreme notions of absolute existence and non existence. The main purpose of the formula of Dependent Arising is to blaze the Middle Path of conditionality as summed up in the abstract principle:

> *Imamiṁ sati idaṁ hoti,*
> *Imass'uppādā idaṁ uppajjati*
> *Imasmiṁ asati idaṁ na hoti,*
> *Imassa nirodhā idaṁ nirujjhati.*

— M. N. III. 63

"When this is, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises; when this is not, that does not come to be, with the stopping of this, that is stopped."

All the formulas of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* are specific applications of this principle. When applied to the phenomena of our daily experience, this principle enables us to wean our minds from the tendency to rest on the concepts of existence and non-existence. As a preliminary step towards this end, those two concepts are replaced by the two terms '*uppāda*' (arising) and '*vaya*' (decay). These latter enable us to *view* the two extremes *rightly (sammā diṭṭhi)* as they are suggestive of conditionality. In developing *samatha* and *vipassanā* (calm and insight), the mind is made to oscillate between these two terms with *ever increasing* momentum, spurred on by the three signata: *anicca* (transience), *dukkha* (suffering) and *anattā* (not-self). At the peak of intensity in this oscillation, the lingering notions

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from the ghee junket; but when it is milk, it is not called curds or butter or ghee or junket — and when it is curds, it is not called by any of the other names and so on.

"Just so Citta, when any one of the three modes of personality (i.e., the gross, the mental and the formless) is going on, it is not called by the names of the others. For these, Citta, are merely names, expressions, turns of speech, designations in common use in the world. And of these a Tathāgata (one who has won the truth) makes use indeed, but is not led astray by them."

— D. B. I 263

of existence and non-existence wane into insignificance since the mind now hardly rests on them. The three signata involved in the oscillation have by now built up a powerful motive force of detachment. So the mind 'gets weary of' *(nibbidā)* the extremes, and decides to 'step out' *(nissaraṇa)* of the process. Hence he cuts off the thread of selfhood — already made slender as at the stage of neither-perception-nor-non-perception *(nevasaññānāsaññāyatana)* — the thread by which his mind was oscillating under the artificial superstructure of concepts. As he lets go selfhood, he touches the realm of cessation (*'so nirodhaṁ phusati' - Poṭṭhapāda Sutta)*. Thus the distressful tension abates *(dukkhūpasama)*, the mental synergies are allayed *(saṁkhārūpasama)*, and the triple process of conceptualisation subsides *(papañcavūpasama)*. Along with the concepts of the extremes, that of a middle also disappears. In short all concepts lose their significance for him *(papañcasaṁkhā-pahāna)*. As for the relevance of the metaphor of mental pendulum that we have adopted in this connection, attention may now be drawn to the following passage of the *Udāna*[1] dealing with the problem of *Nibbāna*.

Nissitassa ca caliaṁ anissitassa calitaṁ natthi, calite asati passaddhi, passadhiyā sati nati na hoti, natiyā asati āgatigati na hoti, āgatigatiyā asati cutūpapāto na hoti, cutūpapāte asati ı evidha na huraṁ na ubhayamantare, esevanto dukkhassāti . . . , Ud. 81. (See also Netti. 65 ff.)

"For him who clings, there is wavering, for him who clings not there is no wavering. Wavering not being, there is calm; calm being, there is no bending; bending not being, there is no coming and going; coming and going not being, there is no death and birth; death and birth not being, there is no 'here', no 'yonder', nor anything between the two. This indeed is the end of Ill."

The word '*nissita*' (lit. 'resting on') is reminiscent of the Buddha's sermon to Kaccāyana on the two extremes. This being so, the rest of the passage accords well with the metaphor. To one who rests on the verbal dichotomy, there is mental unsteadi-

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[1] The passage occurs also at M. N. III. 266.

ness or irritability. Hence to him who does not rest on it, there is no such irritability. The absence of irritability brings about tranquillity of mind. The tranquil mind has no inclination towards conceptual distinctions of two extremes or of any middle position. This release from the bondage of concepts is itself the end of suffering.[1]

Abiding in the Void

A more lucid illustration of the fact that the descent into *Suññatā* is gradual and collateral with experience, can be found

[1] The commentaries try to give a concrete content to the dichotomous concepts occurring in this passage. It appears, however, that the expressions like '*āgatī-gati*' and '*cutūpapāta*' as they are used here, do not refer to actual death and birth but merely stand for the abstract concepts of the same. This will be clear from the following passage where '*cutūpapāta*' is taken as the causal antecedent of '*āyatiṁ-jāti-jarāmaraṇa*' (future birth, decay and death).

Yato ca kho bhikkhave no ce ceteti, no ca pakappeti no ca anuseti, ārammaṇaṁ etaṁ na hoti viññāṇassa ṭhitiyā, ārammaṇe asati patiṭṭhā viññāṇassa na hoti. Tad appatiṭṭhite viññāṇe avirūḷhe, nati na hoti, natiyā asati āgatigati na hoti, āgatigatiyā asati cutūpapāto na hoti, cutūpapāte asati āyatiṁ jātijarāmaraṇaṁ sokapar.devadukkhadomanassupāyāsā nirujjhanti. . . . Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hotīti.

— S. N. II. 67

"But, on the other hand, monks, if one does not will, nor entertains thought-constructions, nor has proclivities, then this does not become an object for the persistence of the consciousness. The object not being there, there is no station of consciousness; consciousness not being stationed and not having grown, there is no bending; bending not being, there is no coming or going; there being no coming and going, there is no decease or birth; there being no decease or birth, there is no future birth, old age, and death, grief, lamenting, suffering, sorrow, and despair. Such is the cessation of this mass of Ill."

— K. S. II. 46-47

in the *Cūla Suññata Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya.* There we see Ānanda inquiring of the Buddha with some diffidence whether the Lord actually meant what he said, when he declared at the township of Nagaraka that he used to spend most of the time 'abiding in the void' (*suññatāvihārena*). The Buddha reassures Ānanda, adding that not only in the past but at present also he is used to 'abiding in the void.' Then he proceeds to explain the 'true unperverted and pure descent into the void' (*yathābhuccā avipallatthā parisuddhā suññatāvakkanti*). In keeping with his empirical approach, the Buddha begins from his immediate surroundings – the Monastery of Pubbārāma itself.

. . . . Seyyathāpi ayaṁ Migāramātu pāsādo suñño hatthigavāssavalavena, suñño jātarūparajatena, suñño itthipurisasannipātena; atthi cevidaṁ asuññataṁ yadidaṁ bhikkhusaṁghaṁ paṭicca ekattaṁ; evameva kho Ānanda, bhikkhu amanasikaritvā gāmasaññaṁ amanasikaritvā manussasaññaṁ araññasaññam paṭicca manasikaroti ekattaṁ. Tassa araññasaññāya cittaṁ pakkhandati pasīdati santiṭṭhati adhimuccati. So evaṁ pajānāti: Ye assu darathā gāmasaññaṁ paṭicca, tedha na santi; ye assu darathā manussasaññaṁ paṭicca tedha na santi; atthi cevāyaṁ darathamattā yadidaṁ arañña saññaṁ paṭicca ekattanti. So: 'Suññamidaṁ saññāgataṁ gāmasaññāyāti pajānāti; suññamidaṁ saññāgataṁ manussasaññāyāti pajānāti. Atthi cevidaṁ asuññataṁ yadidam araññasaññaṁ paṭicca ekattanti. Iti yaṁ hi kho tattha na hoti, tena taṁ suññaṁ samanupassati; yaṁ pana tattha avasiṭṭham hoti, taṁ santaṁ idaṁ atthīti pajānāti. Evampissa esā Ānanda yathābhuccā avipallatthā parisuddhā suññatāvakkanti bhavati.

— M. N. III. 104

"As this palace of Migāra's mother is empty of elephants, cows, horses and mares, empty of gold and silver, empty of assemblages of men and women, and there is only this that is not emptiness, that is to say, the oneness grounded on the order of monks, even so Ānanda, a monk, not attending to the perception of village, not attending to the perception of human beings, attends to the oneness grounded on the perception of forest. His mind is satisfied with, pleased with, set on and freed in, the perception of forest. He comprehends thus: 'The disturbances

that might be resulting from the perception of village do not exist here; the disturbances that might be resulting from the perception of human beings do not exist here. There is only this degree of disturbance, that is to say, the oneness grounded on the perception of forest.' He regards that which is not there as empty of it. But in regard to what remains there, he comprehends, 'This is' because it is. Thus, Ānanda, this comes to be for him a true, unperverted and pure descent into emptiness..."

In much the same manner as above, the Buddha describes how a monk gradually and by stages attains to the perception of the earth as the object of meditative absorption (*paṭhavisaññā*), the perception of the infinity of space (*ākāsānañcāyatanasaññā*), the perception of the infinity of consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana-saññā*), the perception of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatanasaññā*), the perception of neither perception nor-non-perception (*neva-saññānāsaññāyatanasaññā*), and the mental concentration based on the signless (*animittaṁ cetosamādhi*). At the last mentioned stage, he knows that he is experiencing only those forms of 'disturbances' (*darathā*) arising from the body endowed with the six sense-spheres, due to the fact that he is living. Then again he reflects on the mental concentration on the signless, and his mind delights and abides therein. He now begins to reflect thus: "*Ayampi kho animitto cetosamādhi abhisaṁkhato abhisañ-cetayito. Yaṁ kho pana kiñci abhisaṁkhataṁ abhisañcetayitaṁ tadaniccaṁ nirodhadhammaṁ* ..." "This concentration of mind that is signless, is effected and thought out. But whatever is effected and thought out, that is impermanent and liable to cease." Even as he knows and sees thus. his mind is released from the cankers of sense-pleasures, of becoming and of ignorance. In freedom, he has the knowledge that he is freed and he comprehends that he has attained the Goal. He introspects and finds that while those disturbances that might arise from the three cankers are no longer there, he is still subject to whatever disturbances might arise from his body with its six sense-spheres due to the fact that he is alive. Accordingly he determines the fact of voidness, being faithful to the findings of his introspection. The Buddha sums up the discourse by asserting that this is the true, unperverted, pure and *supreme* descent into voidness. ("*Evamassa esā Ānanda yathābhuccā avippallatthā parisuddhā paramānuttarā suññatāvakkanti bhavati*".)

Limitations of the Dialectical Approach.

This sutta, which brings out the early Buddhist attitude to *Suññatā*, has a moral for the dialectician himself. The history of Buddhist thought bears witness to the fact that there is a danger lurking behind the dialectical skill to blow up concepts. The dialectician might sometimes develop a complex of his intellectual superiority and proceed to demolish indiscriminately all concepts and theories around him, subjecting them to ridicule. He might throw all ethics to the winds and lull himself into the belief that he has arrived at the Truth. He might even hide his sceptic head ostrich-like in a mass of dialectical verbiage, in a vain attempt to escape the concepts of the 'dull-witted worldlings'. Such wiseacres are haunted and balked by those very concepts the moment they peep out - or maybe even before that — for the simple reason that the paradoxes true of the emancipated sage are not true of them. The purpose of developing a dialectical consciousness is not to play intellectual hide and-seek, but to be alive to the unsound facts of experience within and without oneself. Hence the dialectician has to realise the fact that he is at the mercy of concepts even in his dialectical attempt to demolish concepts. This chastening thought should humble him all the more and prod him on to transcend them with whatever tools there are within his reach. A dream may be proved false in the light of waking experience, but all the same, it is relatively true as a *fact* of experience. Similarly, the deluding character of concepts is a fact of experience and must not be ignored on that account. Concepts, for all their vicious potency to delude us, are not to be blamed *per se*, for they are merely objectifications or projections of our own *taṇhā*, *māna* and *diṭṭhi*—our cravings, our conceit and our views. Hence, in the last analysis, concepts have to be tackled at their source. They are not so much to be demolished, as to be comprehended and transcended. The attempt to dislodge concepts at the purely intellectual level leads to infinite regress in thought, as will be evident from the following dialogue between the Buddha and the wandering ascetic Dīghanakha.

"I, good Gotama, speak thus; I am of this view: 'All is not pleasing to me.'

"This view of yours, Aggivessana: 'All is not pleasing to me' - does this view of yours not please you?"

"If this view were pleasing to me, good Gotama, this would be like it too, this would be like it too."

"Now, Aggivessana, when those, the majority in the world, speak thus: 'This would be like it too, this would be like it too' — they do not get rid of that very view and they take up another view. Now, Aggivessana, when those, the minority in the world, speak thus: 'This would be like it too, this would be like it too' — they get rid of that very view and do not take up another view."

— M. L. S. II 170; (M. N. I. 497 ff.)

The Buddha, however, granted that Dīghanakha's view is nearer detachment when compared with its opposite view, 'all is pleasing to me.' Dīghanakha, for a moment, was elated, thinking that the Buddha was praising and upholding his view without reserve. But he was disillusioned when the Buddha went on to show how the very dogmatic view that all views are unacceptable can itself give rise to suffering:

"As to this, Aggivessana, those recluses and brahmins who speak thus and are of this view: 'All is not pleasing to me,' if a learned man be there who reflects thus: 'If I were to express this view of mine that: ' all is not pleasing to me," and obstinately holding to it and adhering to it, were to say: "This is the very truth, all else is falsehood," there would be for me dispute with two (view - holders): both with whatever recluse or brahmin who speaks thus and is of this view: "All is pleasing to me," and with whatever recluse or brahmin who speaks thus and is of this view: "Part is pleasing to me, part is not pleasing to me" — there would be dispute for me with these two. If there is dispute, there is contention, if there is contention there is trouble, if there is trouble, there is vexation.' So he, beholding this dispute and contention and trouble and vexation for himself, *gets rid of that very view and does not take up another view.* Thus is the getting rid of these views, thus is the casting away of these views."

Incidentally, this dialogue[1] is of refreshing relevance in view of certain misconceptions among modern philosophers who

[1] According to the *Dīghanakha Sutta,* Ven. Sāriputta attained arahanthood having listened to this dialogue.

overestimate the value of dialectics. One might do well to compare it with these observations by Dr. T. R. V. Murti in his defence of the Mādhyamika system. (*The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*):

"....The dialectic as '*Sūnyatā*' is the removal of the constrictions which our concepts, with their practical or sentimental bias, have put on reality. It is the freeing of reality of the artificial and accidental restrictions, and not the denial of reality. *Sūnyatā* is negation of negations; it is thus a reaffirmation of the infinite and inexpressibly positive character of the Real." (p. 160)

"Criticism of theories is no theory. Criticism is but the awareness of what a theory is, how it is made up; it is not the proposing of a new theory. Negation of positions is not one more position. Dialectic, as analysis, does not impose any new thing; it reveals rather than add or distort...." (p. 161)

".... The conflict of opposed theories and stand-points is resolved in the Mādhyamika by analysing each theory and exhibiting its inner flaw; the dialectic dissolves theories without residue; it does not precipitate another theory...." (p. 305)

"....Criticism is deliverance of the human mind from all entanglements and passions. It is freedom itself. This is the true Mādhyamika standpoint...." (p. 41)

We are afraid that this picture of the dialectic is somewhat overdrawn. Such a complacent attitude towards the omnipotence of the dialectic is not without its dangers. This fact is revealed in certain strands of thought in the Mādhyamika system itself. A typical illustration of the regression in thought may be seen in the series of repeated negations which were supposed to culminate in Absolute-Voidness (*atyanta-sūnyatā*). There was also a tendency to hypostatise the abstract concept of *Sūnyatā* and make it an Absolute — some eternal principle from which everything comes out and to which everything ultimately returns. As regards this latter trend, it is significant that in the *Cūla Suññata Sutta* the Buddha emphasises – though in a very matter-of-fact tone – that '*suññatā*' is as much a relative term as any other. Hence a dual introspective analysis for ascertaining

the experimental data of which one's mind is void and of which one's mind is not void, is seen to precede the determination of each stage of the experience of voidness. The recurrent phrase: "He regards that which is not there as empty of it. But in regard to what remains there, he comprehends: 'This is,' because it is" brings out this criterion in simple terms. The criterion holds good even for the highest stage of the experience of voidness (*paramānuttarā suññatāvakkanti*) described in the sutta. At this stage the mind is void of the cankers of sense-desires, existence and ignorance, but there is still a fact of experience which is not void, namely, the painful physical experiences that might arise due to the fact that one is living. So then, there is no necessity to hypostatise the concept of *suññatā*. Instead of resorting to an absolutist conception of voidness by confusing the three path-ways of conventional usage regarding temporal notions, one must be realistic enough to recognise the present as the present, the past as the past, and the future as the future. The stages of voidness would thereby harmonize with the levels of experience.

"Monks, there are these three pathways of conventional usage, of nomenclature, of designation, which are not being confused, have never been confused, will not be confused and are not despised by monks and recluses who are wise. And what three? Whatever material form that is past, has ceased, has undergone change, 'has been' is its reckoning, its appellation, its designation. It is not reckoned in terms of 'is' and 'will be.' Whatever feeling. . . .perception. . volitional activity. .consciousness. . . ."[1]

It appears that two words coming up again and again in the *Cūla Suññata Sutta* would, if correctly appreciated, serve to keep the dialectician in his proper place. The first of them, *darathā*

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[1] *Tayo'me bhikkhave niruttipathā adhivacanapathā paññattipathā asaṁkiṇṇā asaṁkiṇṇapubbā na saṁkīyissanti appatikuṭṭhā samaṇehi brāhmaṇehi viññūhi. Katame tayo? Yaṁ hi bhikkhave rūpaṃ atītaṁ niruddhaṁ vipariṇataṁ ahosīti tassa saṇkhā, ahosīti tassa samaññā, ahosīti tassa paññatti. Na tassa saṅkhā. . atthīti, na tassa saṅkhā bhavisssatīti. .yā vedanā. .yā saññā. .ye saṅkhārā yaṁ viññāṇaṁ. .*"

— S. N. III. 71-72

('distresses,' 'disturbances'), painfully reminds him of those unpleasant facts of experience which cannot be deceived by any amount of dialectical skill on his part. The second — which is perhaps the more insinuating — is the word *avipallatthā*, 'unperverted', used to describe the pure and proper descent into voidness. This word, by implication, would mean that any other supposed mode of descent into voidness, such as the dialectical method, would be a perversion. A perversion indeed would it be if one contrives to jettison the raft and jubilate over it, even before setting out for the further bank. A better illustration of such perversion may be seen in the parable which gave the *Alagaddūpama Sutta* ('Discourse on the Parable of the Water-snake') its name:

"Monks, it is like a man walking about, aiming after a water-snake, searching after a water snake, looking about for a water-snake. He might see a large water-snake and he might take hold of it by a coil or by its tail; the water-snake, having rounded on him, might bite him on his hand or arm or on another part of his body; from this cause he might come to dying or to pain like unto dying. What is the reason for this? Monks, it is because of his wrong grasp of the water-snake. Even so, monks, do some foolish men here master dhamma — the discourses in prose, in prose and verse, the expositions, the verses, the uplifting verses, the 'as it was-saids,' the Birth Stories, the Wonders, the Miscellanies. These, having mastered that dhamma, do not test the meanings of these things by intuitive wisdom, and these things whose meaning is untested by intuitive wisdom do not become clear; they master this dhamma simply for the advantage of reproaching others and for the advantage of gossiping and they do not arrive at that goal for the sake of which they mastered dhamma. These things, badly grasped by them, conduce for a long time to their woe and sorrow. What is the reason for this? It is because of a wrong grasp of things."

— M L. S. I. 172 (M. N. I. 133)

The amusing story of the man who wished to carry the raft on his head after crossing over, out of a naive sense of gratitude for it, may be compared with the tragic story of the man who seized the snake by its tail. If the former's position is ludicrous,

the latter's is dangerous — nay, suicidal. It may also be mentioned that the parable of the water-snake was aimed at the recalcitrant monk Ariṭṭha, who misrepresented the Buddha regarding his strictures on sense desires. Ariṭṭha's misconceived theory was couched in these words: "*Tathāhaṁ bhagavatā dhammaṁ desitaṁ ājānāmi yathā yẹ'me antarāyikā dhammā vuttā bhagavatā te paṭisevato nāḷaṁ antarāyāya.*" ("In so far as I understand the dhamma taught by the Lord, it is that in following those things called 'stumbling-blocks' by the Lord, there is no stumbling-block at all.") We have no clear indication in the sutta[1] as to the dialectical process through which he arrived at his 'paradoxical' conclusion; but the fact that he obstinately held on to his view in the face of searching criticism by his fellow monks seems to suggest that he did have some dialectics in him. We seem to get a hint in the same direction in the Buddha's words cited above. Perhaps here we are already dealing with an early instance of a perversion of dialectics leading to moral anarchy. The attempt to ignore the needs of psychology and ethics in the haste to grasp intellectually the metaphysical subtleties nearer the Goal may be figuratively compared with the attitude of the man who seized the snake by the tail before subduing it. Though there were attempts to assert the importance of ethics, the Mādhyamika system with its ruthless attack on concepts tended to overshoot itself in its dialectical ebullience. Thus much of the significant service rendered by that system of thought in exposing the futility of the preoccupation with concepts in 'Hīnayāna' circles, was ultimately offset by its own extravagances. It was rightly affirmed by the Mādhyamikas that the Buddha had recommended the abandonment of all views

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[1] According to the Commentary (M. A. II. 103), Ariṭṭha's reasoning proceeded on the following lines: "These householders, while enjoying the five strands of sense-pleasures, become Stream-winners and Once-Returners. Monks also see pleasant shapes with their eyes. . . .experience pleasant contacts with their bodies, and they use soft rugs and coverlets. All this is allowable. Why, then, not the sight, the sound, the smell, the taste and the touch of women? These too are allowable."

including that of *sūnyata.*[a] This affirmation, however, was belied as the system lacked those 'built-in' safeguards against perversion that are to be found in the Pāli Nikāyas. According to the early Buddhist standpoint, the Middle Path consisted neither in the confronation of every thesis with its antithesis, nor in their synthesis, nor again in their total refutation, but in a balanced understanding of the relative and pragmatic value of concepts. Dialectical consciousness, therefore, as an intellectual experience of the ultimate futility of concepts, is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the attainment of the Goal. Nor is it a panacea for the all-pervasive *dukkha.* It is no doubt an essential ingredient in *sammā diṭṭhi,* which is but the first step in the Path. The ethical Middle Path lies right through conceptual formulations as steps of training, which are to be made use of with circumspection and detachment. The dialectician pledged to logical consistency might regard this position as being riddled with contradictions. We have on record a typical instance of such an attitude in the words of the brahmin Māgandiya in the *Māgandiya Sutta* (*Sn.*).

Na diṭṭhiyā na sutiyā na ñāṇena Māgandiyāti Bhagavā -
sīlabbatenāpi na suddhimāha
adiṭṭhiyā assutiyā aññāṇā
asīlatā abbatā nopi tena
ete ca nissajja anuggahāya
santo anissāya bhavaṁ na jappe.

— Vs. 893

"It is said that purity does not result from views, learning, knowledge, holy vows and ascetic practices, O Māgandiya," (so said the Buddha), "nor does it arise in the absence of views, learning, knowledge, holy vows and ascetic practices. Abandoning them, grasping none of them, and not dependent on any of them, one should not crave for existence."

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[a] *Sūṇyatā sarvadrsṭīnāṁ - proktā nihsaraṇaṁ jinaih,*
yeṣāṁ tu sūnyatādrṣṭis-tānasādhyān babhāsire.

M. K. XIII 8

"*Sūnyatā* has been preached by the Buddha as the abandonment of all views; but those for whom *sūnyatā* itself is a view - they are said to be incurable."

No ce kira diṭṭhiyā na sutiyā na ñāṇena - iti Māgandiyo -
sīlabbatenāpi visuddhimāha
adiṭṭhiyā assutiyā aññāṇā
asīlatā abbatā no pi tena
maññemahaṁ momuhameva dhammaṁ
diṭṭhiyā eke paccenti suddhiṁ.

— Vs. 840

"If you say that purity does not arise from views, learning, knowledge, holy vows and ascetic practices," (so said Māgandiya) "and also if you say that it does not arise in the absence of views, learning, knowledge, holy vows and ascetic practices, then I consider that your teaching is foolish, for some arrive at purity through views."

A detailed exposition of the validity of this apparently contradictory position occurs in the *Rathavinīta Sutta* (M. N.) in the form of a dialogue between Sāriputta and Puṇṇa Mantāniputta. Tha simile of the relay of seven chariots, by which Puṇṇa illustrates the inner consistency of the seven stages of purity, will serve to drive home the twin principles of relativity and pragmatism.

"It is as though, brother, while King Pasenadi was staying in Sāvatthi, something to be done urgently should arise in Sāketa, and seven relay chariots would be arranged for him between Sāvatthi and Sāketa. Then, brother King Pasenadi of Kosala, having left Sāvatthi by the palace gate, might mount the first chariot in the relay, and by means of the first chariot in the relay he would reach the second chariot in the relay. . . .the third. . . .the fourth. . . .the fifth. . . . the sixth. . . .the seventh. . . and by means of the seventh chariot in the relay he would reach the palace gate in Sāketa. . . .

". . . .Even so, brother, purity of moral habit is of purpose as far as purity of mind; purity of mind is of purpose as far as purity of view. . . .purity through crossing over doubt. . . purity of knowledge and insight into the Way and what is not the Way. . . . purity of knowledge and insight into the course. . . . purity arising from knowledge and insight. .. purity arising from knowledge and insight is of purpose as far as utter *Nibbāna*

without attachment. Brother, the holy-life under the Lord is lived for the purpose of utter *Nibbāna* without attachment."

— M L. S. I. 192

It apppears that the difference in approach between early Buddhism and the Mādhyamika system towards the problem of concepts hinges on what might be called a subtle shift of emphasis in the interpretation of the terms '*suñña*' and '*attā*'. In the Pāli Canon we find a definition of the word '*suñña*' given by the Buddha himself in reply to the following question of Ānanda:

Suñño loko suñño lokoti bhante vuccati. Kittāvatā nu kho bhante suñño lokoti vuccati?

Yasmā ca kho Ānanda suññaṁ attena vā attaniyena vā tasmā suñño loko'ti vuccati. Kiñca Ānanda suññaṁ attena vā attaniyena vā?

"*Cakkhuṁ kho Ānanda suññaṁ attena vā attaniyena vā. . . . rūpā. . . .cakkhuviññāṇaṁ. .cakkhusamphasso suñño attena vā atteniyena vā. . . .pe. . . . Yampidaṁ manosamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaṁ sukhaṁ vā dukkhaṁ vā adukkhamasukhaṁ vā tampi suññaṁ attena vā attaniyena vā.*"

— S. N IV. 54

" 'Void is the world! Void is the world!' they say, O Lord. Pray, Lord, how far does this saying go?"

"Because the world is void of the self, Ānanda, or of what belongs to the self, therefore, is it said: 'Void is the world'. And what, Ānanda, is void of the self or of what belongs to the self? Eye. visual objects. . . . eye-consciousness. . . . eye-contact. . and whatever feeling, happy, unhappy or neutral, that arises due to mind contact, that too is void of the self or of what belongs to the self"

The world is called 'void' in the sense that it is devoid of a self or of anything belonging to a self. It must be noted that the 'world' in this definition corresponds to the totality of sense-experience based on the sixsenses. The implication is therefore that no element of experience can be regarded as one's self or as belonging to oneself. '*Attā*' has to be taken in its subjective

sense as the notion of a soul or an ego. Its characteristic is the power to own and control. The Buddha has clarified this fact in the very first sermon he delivered on the characteristics of *anattā* (*Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta*, Vin. I. 13, S. N. III. 67).

"Body, monks, is not self. Now were this body self, monks, this body would not tend to sickness, and one might get the chance of saying in regard to body, 'Let body become thus for me, let body not become thus for me.' But inasmuch, monks, as body is not self, therefore body tends to sickness, and one does not get the chance of saying in regard to body, 'Let body become thus for me, let body not become thus for me.'

"Feeling is not self. . . .Perception is not self. . . . mental formations are not self. . . consciousnesss is not self. . . ."

"What do you think about this, monks? Is body permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, Lord."

"But is that which is impermanent painful or pleasurable?"

"Painful, Lord."

"But is it fit to consider that which is impermanent, painful, of a nature to change, as 'This is mine,' 'This am I,' 'This is myself'?"

"It is not, Lord."

"Is feeling. . . .perception. . . .mental formations. . . .consciousness?. . . .

"Wherefore, monks, whatever is body, past, future, or present, or internal or external, or gross or subtle, or low or excellent, whether it is far or near — all body should by means of right wisdom be seen, as it really is, thus: **This is not mine, this am I not, this is not my self.**

". . . . Whatever feeling. . . . perception. . . . mental formations. . . .consciousness. . . ."

— BK. of D., IV 20-2

Thus the main prong of attack is levelled at the concept of the soul as the controlling agent who is capable of experiencing

happiness, which necessarily has to be permanent in order to be perfect. It is true that what gives rise to this notion is the idea of permanence or substantiality, but this latter is sufficiently rendered by the term '*nicca*'. The illusion of substantiality is linked with the psychological impulse for happiness (*sukha*), which in its turn sustains the illusion of the ego (*attā*). Now, the Mādhyamika system often seems to stress this notion of substantiality underlying the illusion of an *ātman*, there by giving an objective twist to that word. As already indicated, the word '*nicca*' by itself does sufficient justice to this primary notion of substantiality which originates at the cognitive level. In '*sukha*' and '*attā*' we have the affective and conative reactions to the illusion of permanence. Hence selfhood is to be found at the innermost conative impulses within the mind. It is not something out there in the material objects or in concepts, for that matter. It is what we attribute to them or superimpose on them. Therefore, to believe that by merely demolishing concepts or theories one can rise above them is to stop at the fringe of the problem. In coining the two expressions, '*pudgala nairātmya*' and '*dharma-nairātmya*', the Mādhyamikas seem to have ignored the original significance of the term '*anattā*'. According to the early Buddhist point of view, there can be no basis for such a distinction since the *dharmas* or elements, when they are regarded as being one's self or as belonging to one's self, would thereby become objects of his mind and part of his five aggregates. When it was said that one should look upon all *dhammas* as *anattā*, it only meant that one has to regard them as not being one's own self or a part thereof. Perhaps a better way to bring out the crux of the present argument would be to pose the question whether there will be any *dharma-nairātmya* left over to be realised, when one has realised the so-called *pudgala-nairātmya*. It might of course be urged in mitigation that what gave rise to the above two expressions, was the very dogmatic attitude of the 'Hīnayānists' in clinging to the *dharmas*. But this does not appear to be sufficient justification, since that dogmatic attitude of the 'Hīnayānists' is merely an indication that they have not grasped the full significance of the *nairātmya* doctrine. If they had, they would no longer be dogmatic with regard to the *dharmas* which are the objects of the sixth sense. In any case, this confusion as to the basic issues involved seems to have had its repercussions on the

Mādhyamika conception of *sūnyatā*. As against this, the conception of *suññatā* in the Pāli Nikāyas was always defined in relation to experience. Even when it is said that one should always look upon the world as 'void', with mindfulness, it is to be taken as a step of training in detachment.[1] However, as regards the experience of *suññatā*, one has to conform to the levels of *suññatā* described in the *Cūla Suññata Sutta*. We find further illustration of this particular approach in the '*Suññakathā*' of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I. 117 ff), where twenty-five modes of voidness are enumerated and defined. Even the concept of '*suñña-suñña*', for all its apparent similarity to '*sūnyatā-sūnyatā*' of the Mādhyamikas, merely implies the voidness as to selfhood in its specific application to the six senses. The principle of relativity in the determination of voidness may be seen all along the list of definitions. The last, which is called '*paramattha-suññaṁ*', is particularly significant in its formulation. As the highest stage of voidness, one would expect it to be termed an Absolute devoid of relation to anything. But this is not so, and it still has relation to *awareness* since this stage of voidness is called '*sampajānassa pavattapariyādānaṁ sabbasuññatānaṁ paramatthasuññaṁ*' ("The highest of all forms of voidness wherein

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[1] *Suññato lokaṁ avekkhassu – Mogharāja sadā sato*
attānudiṭṭhim ūhacca – evaṁ maccutaro siyā
evaṁ lokaṁ avekkhantaṁ – maccurājā na passati

— Sn. 1119

"Regard the world as void; and e'er
Alert, uproot false view of self.
Thus, Mogharajah, thou wouldst be
Death's crosser; and regarding thus
The world, death's king doth see thee not."

— W. C. E. B.

one *mindfully* exhausts all existence").[1] In view of the fact that this refers to the final attainment of Parinibbāna of the Emancipated One we may regard this as a clear indication that the conception of *suññatā* in early Buddhism was always relative and experiential.

The upshot of the above discussion on *suññatā* would be the revelation that the dialectician, if he seriously intends escaping from all views and concepts, should *disown* and transcend them rather than demolish them *in toto*. As the objects of the sixth sense, concepts are as much a fact of experience as are the objects of the other senses. Hence they will continue in the world as worldly conventions in spite of all their flaws and contradictions. The Middle Path, therefore, consists essentially in the pragmatic approach of choosing and using what is essential for the purpose, without attachment. This approach is abundantly clear in a certain criterion which the Buddha is seen declaring so often in the suttas. For the purpose of quotation, we may choose the following context which has a striking relevance to the present discussion.

"Some things, Poṭṭhapāda, I have preached and laid down categorically and some other things non-categorically. And what, Poṭṭhapāda, are those things that I have preached and laid down

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[1] ....*Atha vā pana sampajānassa anupādisesāya nibbānadhātuyā parinibbāyantassa idañceva cakkhuppavattaṁ pariyādiyati aññañca cakkhuppavattaṁ na uppajjati: idañceva sotapavattam. .pe. .ghānapavat tam. . jivhāpavattaṁ. . . . kāyapavattaṁ .. manopavattaṁ pariyādiyati aññañca manopavattaṁ na uppajjati. Idaṁ sampajānassa . . . pavattapariyādānam sabbasuññatānaṁ paramatthasuññanti.*

— Patis. I. 184.

"Or else, in him who is mindfully passing away into the *Nibbāna*-element leaving no substrata, this visual process is extinguished and no other visual process arises, this auditory process is extinguished and no new one arises. . . . olfactory process. . . .gustatory process. . tactile process. . . .mental process... This is the highest of all forms of voidness in which there is a mindful extinction of all processes."

non-categorically?. . . . Is the world eternal?. . . . Is the world not eternal?. . . .Is the world finite?. . . . Is the world infinite?. . . . Is the soul the same as the body?. . . . Is the soul one thing and the body another?. . Does the Perfect One exist after death?. . . Does he not exist after death?. . .Does he both exist and not exist after death?. . . .Does he neither exist nor not exist after death?. . .

"And why, O Poṭṭhapāda, have I preached and laid down those things non-categorically? Because, Poṭṭhapāda, these are not calculated to profit, are not concerned with the Dhamma, they do not redound even to the elements of right conduct, nor to detachment, nor to purification from lusts, nor to quietitude, nor to tranquillisation of heart, nor to real knowledge, nor to insight, nor to *Nibbāna*. Therefore is it that I have preached and laid down those things non-categorically.

"And what, Poṭṭhapāda, are those things that I have laid down categorically? This is suffering – this, Poṭṭhapāda, is a thing I have preached and laid down categorically. This is the arising of suffering. . . . This is the cessation of suffering. . . . This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering. . . . .

"And why, Poṭṭhapāda, have I preached and laid them down categorically? These, Poṭṭhapāda, are calculated to profit, are concerned with the Dhamma, redound to the elements of right conduct, to detachment, to purification from lusts, to quietitude, to tranquillisation of heart, to real knowledge, to insight, to *Nibbāna*. Therefore is it that I have preached and laid down these things categorically."

— D. B. I. 254 f.

From this it appears that the Buddha was sometimes categorical and sometimes not, in preaching or in answering questions, and the criterion is declared to be pragmatic and ethical. The validity of this criterion as regards the Buddha's consistent refusal to give a categorical reply to any of the ten Indeterminate Points (*dasa avyākata-vatthu*) has often been disputed by scholars both ancient and modern. Some, like Prof. A. B. Keith (*Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 63), saw in it a "general poverty of philosophical constructive power" on the part of the Buddha, and treated him as "a genuine agnostic." Some others,

similarly convinced that the criterion lacked in depth and cogency, proceeded to unravel the secret of the Buddha's silence in regard to the *avyākatas*, in purely dialectical terms. One of the earliest attempts in this latter direction is to be seen in the Mādhayamika system. It is very likely that they succeeded to some extent in unravelling this secret. But it appears that in their enthusiasm to discover the secret of the Buddha's silence, they lost sight of the *value* of that secret. The value of a secret lies not so much in the secret itself, as in the *reasons* which made it a secret. In order to find these reasons, one has to retrace one's steps to the above pragmatic criterion given by the Buddha himself. If one needs a deeper evaluation of this criterion one will get it in the *Cūla Māluṅkya Sutta* (M. N.).

The inquisitive monk Māluṅkyaputta gets it into his head to solve once and for all the problem of the Indeterminate Points. He approaches the Buddha and challenges him to give categorical answers to those points on the threat of his leaving the Order. He even makes bold to say that the Buddha should be honest enough to confess his ignorance, instead of evading the issues. Here then, we have an open revolt in the ranks against the Buddha's attitude. But it was not the Buddha who gave in. He rejoined in a sterner fashion, retorting whether there was any prior agreement between him and Māluṅkaputta that he would declare those ten points if the latter entered the Order. Māluṅkyaputta confessed that there was not, and the Buddha humbled him with the words: "*Evaṁ sante moghapurisa ko santo kaṁ paccācikkhasi*?" ("This being so, foolish man, who are you that you are disavowing?")

A very unkind and agnostic attitude indeed, on the part of a teacher who professes to be compassionate and fully-enlightened— one might be tempted to conclude. But the Buddha goes on. He goes on to explain to Māluṅkyaputta that even if one were to declare that one would not live the holy life under him until he answered those ten points, he would never give in. Now comes a parable which, as in so many other instances, embodies a deep truth. It gives the tragic instance of a man shot with a poisoned arrow who refuses to allow the surgeon to treat him until he gets answers to a series of delirious questions regarding the man who shot him, and the bow and arrow used. That obstinate man is prepared even to sacrifice his life for his curiosity. With this

parable the Buddha emphasises the fact that he has laid aside the ten points because they are irrelevant to the attainment of *Nibbāna*, and advises Māluṅkyaputta to treat the indeterminates as indeterminates, and the determined points as so determined. These latter refer to the Four Noble Truths. We are told at the end of the sutta that Māluṅkyaputta was satisfied with this exhortaion. But not so the dialectician who valued the critical spirit of inquiry above everything else. To him, the compassionate reticence of the surgeon, and the pragmatic reasons given by him, were not at all acceptable. So he pressed on regardless, and by the time he returned to the 'Peerless Surgeon' (*Sallakatto anuttaro*), burdened with dossiers of his exhaustive as well as exhausting critical inquiry into the culprit, the bow and the arrow, his condition was well nigh critical. He had used the dialectical principle with such rigour that it shook the very pragmatic and ethical foundations of Buddhism. The value and wisdom of the Buddha's silence thus came to be proved in retrospect. This approach shows a lack of appreciation of the vital link - *dukkha* - that obtains between *anicca* and *anattā*. The early Buddhist attitude was to realise the imperfections of language and logic by observing the internal and external conflict it brought about. This is extremely clear in the *Aṭṭhaka Vagga* of the *Sutta Nipāta*. It was not considerd necessary to counter every possible thesis with an antithesis or to turn every inside out by the *reductio ad absurdum* method merely as an exercise in dialectics, thereby adding to the conflict. It took the more radical attitude of grasping the general principle involved, namely, that of suffering, which provides the true impetus for the spiritual endeavour to transcend all theories by eradicating the subjective bias.

From the foregoing it should be clear that in early Buddhism we have the unique phenomenon of an enlightened dialectical awareness paving the way for a down-to-earth ethical consciousness. Far from undermining spiritual values by encouraging vain sophistry, it reasserted their importance by elevating experience above theoretical knowledge The pragmatic reasons given by the Buddha with regard to his preaching of the Four Noble Truths in categorical terms, should not be taken as a mere edifying call to practise the *Dhamma*. In view of the Buddha's attitude towards the totality of concepts as such, we may say that pragmatism

is the only justification for his preaching those Noble Truths. Words have a value only to the extent that they indicate elements of experience. However, even where words fail, experience triumphs By defining 'voidness' in terms of experience, early Buddhism also pointed out that what is void as to concepts is not devoid of happiness. A discussion of the Goal of spiritual endeavours in Buddhism in philosophical terms, so as to mean the utter cessation of the world of concepts, might sometimes give the impression that here we have the dismal prospect of a mental vacuity. Hence it is that the Buddha, towards the end of a philosophical discourse on the gradual attainment of the cessation of perceptions and sensations, forestalls a possible objection by Poṭṭhapāda and reassures him of the positive experiential content of happiness characteristic of that attainment:

"Now it may well be, Poṭṭhapāda, that you think: 'Evil dispositions may be put away, the dispositions that tend to purification may increase, one may continue to see face to face and by himself come to realise the full perfection and grandeur of wisdom, *but one may continue sad!*' Now that, Poṭṭhapāda, would not be accurate judgment. When such conditions are fulfilled, then there will be *joy and happiness and peace, and in continual mindfulness and self-mastery, one will dwell at ease.*"

— D. B. I. 260

We have already seen how the *Cūla Suññatā Sutta* puts across the same idea in negative terms, with the help of the word '*darathā*'. But by far the most edifying of all attempts to suggest the positive experiential content of *Nibbāna* is the use of the lotus metaphor. The whole philosophy of the transcendence of the world, which we have earlier stated in paradoxical terms, finds fuller expression through the lotus motif.

Udabindu yathāpi pokkhare
padume vārī yathā na lippati
evaṁ muni nopalippati
yadidaṁ diṭṭhasutamutesu vā.

— Sn. 812

"Even as the drop of water on a lotus-leaf does not smear it, or as water smears not the lotus flower, so aloof is the sage who does not cling to whatever he has seen, heard or cognized."

Yehi vivitto vicareyya loke
na tāni uggayha vadeyya nāgo
elambujaṁ kaṇṭakaṁ vārijaṁ yathā
jalena paṁkena canūpalittaṁ
evaṁ munī santivado agiddho
kāme ca loke ca anūpalitto.

— Sn. 845

"Being detached from whatever views one wanders forth in this world, the perfect one does not enter into dispute grasping them; even as the white lotus sprung up in the water with its thorny stalk is not sullied by water and mud, even so the sage who professes peace and is free from avarice is not sullied by sense desires and by the world."

The Lotus and the Fire

This, then, is the brighter side of the utter allayment of *papañca.* It marks the efflorescence of the personality composed of the five aggregates. The transmutation brought about through detachment is so ineffably sublime that it enables the sage to live *in* the world while not being *of* it. He is emotionally imperturbable (*anejo*) and intellectually incapable of being led astray (*nippapañco*). The data of the six senses, both pleasant and unpleasant, in the form of the eight worldly conditions,[1] fall on him only to roll off with pearl like grace, like the drops of water on the lotus petal or leaf — leaving the mind unsullied. No less significant are the implications of the metaphor as to the beauty and fragrance of the flower, which can be traced neither to the mud below it, nor to the water around it, nor to the roots and leaves of the plant itself.[2] Neither can they arise without those factors — truly an incomprehensible position which defies language and logic. But the purity, the beauty, and the fragrance of the lotus are undeniable facts of experience for those around it, as much as is the aloofness of the flower. The wisdom and compassion of the sage, and his profound tranquillity, bear the same relation to our powers of understanding and expression.

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[1] Gain and loss, honour and dishonour, praise and blame, happiness and unhappiness.

[2] See Dhp. 58, 59 (*Puppha Vagga*).

If the life of the emancipated sage is a puzzle for us, his death is even more puzzling. What becomes of him when he passes away — does he exist or does he not? Both conjunctively or neither disjunctively? This, as we saw earlier, was one of the problems which found expression in four of the ten indeterminates (*avyākata*). All the four alternative propositions were laid aside by the Buddha, and again the scholars are in a quandary. Various interpretations of the Buddha's stand on this problem have been bandied back and forth. But the reasons for laying aside those four alternatives are sometimes explained in the suttas to the satisfaction of the respective interlocutors. The term 'Tathāgata' in its wider sense of the Perfect Man (*uttamapuriso paramapuriso paramapattipatto*, S. N. IV. 399) is applicable to the Buddha as well as to the emancipated monk (*vimuttacitto bhikkhu*, M. N. I. 140, 486). The four alternatives seek to categorise him in terms of existence and non-existence. We have already seen how at A. N. IV. 68 these four alternatives were described as products of craving (*taṇhāgata*), of sense-perceptions (*saññāgata)*, of imagination (*maññita*), of conceptual prolificity (*papañcita*), and of delusion (*vippaṭisāro*). The implication, therefore, is that these four propositions are fallacious and misleading. This fact is clearly brought out in the *Aggivacchagotta Sutta* (M. N). There the Buddha exposes their fallacy to Vacchagotta with the help of the following simile of fire.

"What do you think about this, Vaccha? If a fire were blazing in front of you, would you know: 'This fire is blazing in front of me'?"

"Good Gotama, if a fire were blazing in front of me, I should know: 'This fire is blazing in front of me'."

"But if, Vaccha, someone were to question you thus: 'This fire that is blazing in front of you - what is the reason that this is blazing?' — what would you, Vaccha, reply when questioned thus?"

"If, good Gotama, someone were to question me thus: 'This fire. . . . is blazing?' — I, good Gotama, on being questioned thus, would reply thus: 'This fire that is blazing in front me - this fire is blazing because of a supply of grass and sticks'."

"If that fire that was in front of you, Vaccha, were to be quenched, would you know: 'This fire that was in front of me has been quenched'?"

"If, good Gotama, that fire that was in front of me were to be quenched, I would know: 'This fire. . . .has been quenched'."

"But if someone were to question you thus, Vaccha: 'That fire that was in front of you and that has been quenched — to which direction has that fire gone from here, to the east or west or north or south?' – on being questioned thus, what would you, Vaccha, reply?"

"*It does not apply*, good Gotama. For good Gotama, that fire blazed because of a supply of grass and sticks, yet from having totally consumed this and from the lack of other fuel, being without fuel *it is reckoned to be quenched* (*nibbuto tveva saṁkhaṁ gacchati*)."

— M L. S. II. 166

Vaccha is made to admit the fact that the attempt to locate a fire that has 'gone out' is a ludicrous category-mistake caused by the enslavement to linguistic conventions. Fire, as one of the most volatile of elements, provides a homely illustration of the fact of dependent arising and cessation. When Vaccha had grasped this fact, the Buddha brings in the analogy of the Tathāgata.

Evameva kho Vaccha yena rūpena Tathāgataṁ paññāpayamāno paññāpeyya, taṁ rūpaṁ Tathāgatassa pahīnaṁ ucchinnamūlaṁ tālāvatthukataṁ anabhāvakataṁ āyatiṁ anuppādadhammaṁ, rūpasaṁkhā vimutto kho Vaccha Tathāgato gambhīro appameyyo duppariyogāho seyyathāpi mahāsamuddo; uppajjatī ti na upeti, na uppajjatī ti na upeti, uppajjati ca na ca uppajjatī ti na upeti, neva uppajjati na nuppajjatī ti pi na upeti, yāya vedanāya. . . yā ya saññāya. . yehi saṁkhārehi. . yena viññāṇena. . . .na upetī ti'.

— ibid.

"Even so, Vaccha, that material shape by which one designating the Tathāgata might designate him — that material shape has been got rid of by the Tathāgata, cut off at the root, made like unto a palm-tree stump, that can come to no further existence

and is not liable to arise again in the future. Freed from the concept of material shape is the Tathāgata, Vaccha, he is deep, immeasurable, unfathomable as is the great ocean. 'Arises' does not apply; 'does not arise' — does not apply; 'both arises and does not arise' — does not apply; 'neither arises nor does not arise' — does not apply. That feeling. . . . That perception. . . . Those volitional activities. . . . That consciousness. . . does not apply."

The Buddha points out that a Tathāgata has already got rid of each of the five aggregates of attachment whereby one might speak of a Tathāgata in the strict sense of the term. He is thus released from the concept (*saṅkhā*)[1] of form, of feelings, of perceptions, of volitional activities and of consciousness. The egoistic clinging which justifies those concepts is extinct in him. Since the Tathāgata no longer identifies himself with any of those aggregates, to speak of a Tathāgata's rebirth would be as meaningless as the attempt to locate the fire that has 'gone out', 'released' from its fuel.

In the *Avyākata Saṁyutta* (S. N.) the Buddha is seen explaining to Vacchagotta the difference between the ordinary and the emancipated individuals with the analogy of fire:

"*Seyyathāpi, Vaccha, aggi saupādāno jalati no anupādāno evameva khvāhaṁ Vaccha saupādānassa upapattiṁ paññāpemi no anupādānassāti.*

Yasmiṁ pana bho Gotama samaye acci vātena khittā dūrampi gacchati imassa pana bhavaṁ Gotamo kiṁ upādānasmiṁ paññāpeti ti.

Yasmiṁ Vaccha samaye acci vātena khittā dūrampi gacchati, tam ahaṁ vātupādānaṁ vadāmi, vāto hissa Vaccha tasmiṁ samaye upādānaṁ hotī ti.

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[1] Compare the expression '*papañca-saṅkhā-pahāna*' with '*rūpasaṅkhāvimutto*' and its equivalents relating to the other aggregates. This is further proof of the fact that the word '*saṅkhā*' when used in connection with '*papañca*' conveys the sense of reckoning, concept or linguistic convention.

Yasmiñca pana bho Gotama samaye imañca kāyaṁ nikkhipati, satto ca aññataraṁ kāyaṁ anuppatto hoti imassa pana bhavaṁ Gotamo kiṁ upādānasmiṁ paññāpetī ti.

"Yasmiñca kho Vaccha samaye imañca kāyaṁ nikkhipati satto ca aññataraṁ kāyaṁ anuppatto hoti taṁ ahaṁ taṇhupādānaṁ vadāmi, taṇhā hissa Vaccha tasmiṁ samaye upādānaṁ hotī ti."

— S. N. IV. 399-340

"Just as, Vaccha, a fire with fuel blazes up, but not without fuel, even so Vaccha, I declare rebirth to be for him who has grasping (fuel), not for him who has no grasping (fuel)."

"But, master Gotama, at the time when a flame flung by the wind goes a very long way, as to fuel, what says the master Gotama about this?"

"At the time when a flame, Vaccha, flung by the wind goes a very long way, I declare that flame to be supported by the wind. At that time, Vaccha, the wind is its fuel."

"But, master Gotama, at the time when a being lays aside this body and rises up again in another body — what does master Gotama declare to be the fuel for that?"

"At that time, Vaccha, when a being lays aside this body and rises up again in another body, for that I declare craving to be the fuel. Indeed, Vaccha, craving is on that occasion the fuel."

— K. S. IV. 280-1.

It is significant that the term '*Nibbāna*', owing to its metaphorical connections with the 'going out' of a fire, is itself suggestive enough to forestall the above quadrilemma. As in the case of the fire, it is a linguistic convention (*'nibbuto'ti saṁkhaṁ gacchati*) which should not be transgressed or misconstrued. In addition to its psychological import as the allayment of the triple fires of lust, hatred and delusion, it also has this eschatological significance in the sense of the complete allayment of the conflagration that is *saṁsāric* suffering (*dukkhanirodha*). However, these metaphorical implications underlying the term

'*Nibbāna*' seem to have become obscured in course of time due to far-fetched commentarial exegesis.[1]

In the *Anurādha Sutta* (S. N. IV. 380 ff) we find the monk Anurādha seeking the Buddha's advice as to how he should meet the arguments of the heretics when they raise the quadrilemma relating to the Tathāgata. He confesses he had already faced such an unpleasant situation and that he took up the position that the state of the Tathāgata after death can be predicated in other than those four ways. The heretics concerned had then ridiculed him as an incompetent new-comer in the Order, and now he is at a loss to understand how he can put up a reasoned defence in any such future debate. Would the Lord please explain the correct position? Now the Buddha at once proceeds to catechise Anurādha, reminding him of the impermanence and suffering characteristic of the five aggregates, thus convincing him of the fact of *anattā*.[2] He also points out that the appellation 'Tathāgata' can neither be identified with any of the five aggregates, nor can it be distinguished from them. Thereby he disapproves of Anurādha's view that the state of the Tathāgata can be predicated in other than those four ways, since the four alternatives exhaust the universe of discourse. Then the Buddha makes the strange revelation that the Tathāgata cannot be said to exist in the strict sense of the term even here and now, not to speak of his existence hereafter.

Ettha te Anurādha diṭṭheva dhamme saccato thetato tathāgate anupalabbhiyamāne kallaṁ nu taṁ veyyākaraṇaṁ 'Yo so āvuso tathāgato uttamapuriso paramapuriso paramapattippatto taṁ tathāgato aññatrimehi catuhi ṭhānehi paññāpayamāno paññāpeti 'Hoti Tathāgato parammaraṇā ti va. . . .

"Then, Anurādha, *since in just this life* a Tathāgata is not met with in truth, in reality, is it proper for you to pronounce this of him: Friends, he who is a Tathāgata, a super-man, one of the best of beings, a winner of the highest gain, is proclaimed in other than these four ways: 'The Tathāgata exists after death'...."

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[1] See Vism. XVI. 67 - 74; Vbh. A. 51f.

[2] At S. N. III. 109ff, the Venerable Sāriputta employs a similar catechism to dispel the annihilationist view of Yamaka.

Anurādha confesses that his previous conclusion was wrong. Finally the Buddha sums up the correct position in these words:

Pubbe cāhaṁ Anurādha etarahi ca dukkhañceva paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodham.

"Both formerly and now also, Anurādha, it is just suffering and the cessation of suffering that I proclaim."

This sutta too thus makes it sufficiently plain that the four alternatives are laid aside because they are irrelevant and meaningless from the standpoint of the Dhamma. Once the misconceptions underlying that quadrilemma are cleared up analytically, the quadrilemma dissolves of itself. The solvent is none other than the law of Dependent Arising itself. The term 'Tathāgata', as much as any other concept, is a convenient linguistic symbol used to comprehend a complex process of conditionally arisen mental and material phenomena. It exists neither in the five aggregates nor outside of them. However, though he is composed of the five aggregates, the Tathāgata has this difference from the ordinary 'bundles' of aggregates—the worldlings—that he no longer cherishes the illusion of an ego and as such he does not cling to any of the five aggregates. As we have already mentioned, this makes him so incomprehensible from the worldling's standpoint that he is regarded as "deep, immeasurable, unfathomable as is the great ocean."

Since there is no more clinging there is no more rebirth, but this fact cannot be indicated through the second alternative, because there the term 'Tathāgata' has the implicit prejudice of a soul. To do so would be to leave the door open for the annihilationist view. The charge of annihilation does not arise when one grasps the law of Dependent Arising and the fact that the Buddha merely preached about suffering and its cessation. There can be no annihilation since there is no soul to be annihilated. Hence the final cessation in *Nibbāna* is no more lamentable than is the death of an unborn son. There is no room for eternal entities in terms of Tathāgatas, for they are those who comprehend and proclaim the law of Dependent Arising, which is said to

endure in the world whether Tathāgatas arise or not.[1] Tathāgatas themselves are specific conflagrations of suffering which 'go out' after an incandescent flicker, as they no longer hanker after more and more fuel. Although the standpoint of Buddhism is thus made clear, there is a general dislike for the metaphor of the fire for fear of arriving at the annihilationist view.[2] This fear, it must be said, is totally unfounded. On the other hand, there are some scholars who even exploit this metaphor in order to posit an Absolute Cosmic principle or some noumenal essence from which beings come out and to which they finally return. Thus Keith presumes that the ancient Indian conception of fire admitted of such an underlying perduring essence.[3] Even if one is disinclined to state one's deep-seated soul prejudice in such bold terms, one is sometimes tempted to demur between the possibilities of a positive and a negative answer regarding the eternalist and nihilist

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[1] *Katamo ca bhikkhave paṭiccasamuppādo? Jātipaccayā bhikkhave jarāmaraṇaṁ uppādā vā Tathāgatānaṁ anuppādā vā Tathāgatānaṁ ṭhitāva sā dhātu dhammaṭṭhitatā dhammaniyāmatā idappaccayatā.*

— S. N. II. 25.

"What, O monks, is Dependent Arising? Conditioned by birth is decay and death — whether, O monks, there be an arising of Tathāgatas or whether there is no such arising, this nature of things just stands, this causal status, this causal orderliness, the relatedness of this to that."

— K. S. II. 21.

[2] Cf "....The literal meaning of *Nirvāna* does not help us. It means 'blowing out' as of a lamp and the verb is used literally of the extinguishing of a light, but this is not a prominent notion in the treatment of the subject, and the meaning has been modified by its being connected with another verb, for the participle is formed from '*nir-vṛ*' or '*ni vṛ*' meaning tranquil, happy, ceased and '*parinirvṛta*' in its technical sense is 'having attained *nirvāna*'. In any case it does not assert the annihilation of the individual." (E. J. Thomas, *The History of Buddhist Thought*, pp. 123 ff.)

[3] *Buddhist Philosophy*, pp 65 f.

points of view. The inquirer is sought to be kept in a permanent state of suspense as to the correct position. This reluctance to countenance the force of the fire metaphor is due largely to the promptings of the egoistic child in man, which loves to "eat the cake as well as have it." The Buddha's attitude, however, was quite different. Although he was not categorical as regards the four alternatives, he clarified the correct position by resorting to the law of Dependent Arising, which he illustrated with the fire-metaphor:

Accì yathā vātavegena khitto – Upasīvā ti Bhagavā
attham paleti na upeti saṁkhaṁ
evaṁ muni nāmakāyā vimutto
atthaṁ paleti na upeti saṁkhaṁ.

"Lo Upasīva," he replied,
"As flame flung on by force of wind
Flees to its end, reaches what none
Can sum; the silent sage, released
From name-and-from, goes to the goal,
Reaches the state that none can sum."

Atthaṁ gato so uda vā so natthi
udāhu ve sassatiyā arogo
taṁ me muni sādhu viyākarohi
tathā hi te vidito esa dhammo.

"And he who wins the goal, is he
No more, or truly ever well?
That to me, sage, in full explain,
For thine's this Dharma, found and known."

Atthaṁgatassa na pamāṇam atthi – Upasīvā ti Bhagavā
yena naṁ vajju, taṁ tassa natthi
sabbesu dhammesu samūhatesu
samūhatā vādapathā pi sabbe.

— Sn. 1074–76.

"Know, Upasiva," then he said,
"There is no measuring of man,
Won to the goal, whereby they'ld say

His measure is so: that's not for him;
When all conditions are removed,
All ways of telling are removed."[1]

— W. C. E. B., p. 155.

In the light of the foregoing discussion it would be no exaggeration to say that an evaluation of the significance of '*papañca*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*' would greatly facilitate a deeper appreciation of some of the main teachings of Buddhism. It paves the way for a harmonious combination of psychology with ethics and of ethics with philosophy. It gives us the clue to the lotus-philosophy behind the life of the enigmatic sage. The early Buddhist attitude to the problems of language and logic as well as the relationship between theory and practice can also be determined thereby to a great extent. Thus we have here a new angle of study which has immense potentialities for illuminating many a dim-lit passage in the Pāli Canon.

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[1] By some strange irony, these very verses are quoted by some scholars in support of their notion that the Tathāgata does not cease to exist after death *though* he is impredicable. This assertion contradicts itself since even by asserting the Tathāgata's existence in some form or other, they are already predicating him. Besides, this is precisely the position adopted by Anurādha, for which he was upbraided, first by the heretics and then by the Buddha himself. It must be noted that the questions of Upasīva in vs. 1075 are in essence identical with those raised by Vaccha. Upasīva, too, is here trying to locate the extinguished fire.

II

COMMENTARIAL INTERPRETATIONS OF PAPAÑCA AND PAPAÑCA-SAÑÑĀ-SAÑKHĀ

In our attempt to determine and evaluate the significance of '*papañca*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*', we have had occasion to make stray references to some alternative interpretations advanced by ancient and modern scholars. However, we have not attempted therein any detailed or comparative study of the various interpretations, as it might interfere with the coherence of the theme. Hence we shall now cite them, together with relevant comments where necessary, so that it will give the reader something to go by in case he finds our evaluation of the subject to be unacceptable.

The earliest commentarial definitions of the terms '*papañca*' and '*papañca-saṅkhā*' available to us are those in the Canonical Commentary *Mahā Niddesa*. There we read:

(I) *Papañcā yeva papañcasaṁkhā, taṇhā-papañcasaṁkhā, diṭṭhi-papañcasaṁkhā, māna-papañcasaṁkhā.*

— Nid. I. 280.

"*Papañcas* themselves are *papañcasaṁkhā*, to wit: *papañcasaṁkhās* of craving, views and conceit."

(II) *Papañcā yeva papañcasaṁkhā. taṇhā-papañcasaṁkhā diṭṭhipapañcasaṁkhā. Katamaṁ taṇhāpapañcassa mūlaṁ? Avijjā mūlaṁ, ayonisomanasikāro mūlaṁ, asmimāno mūlaṁ ahirikaṁ mūlaṁ anottappaṁ mūlaṁ uddhaccaṁ mūlaṁ. Katamaṁ diṭṭhipapañcassa mūlaṁ? Avijjā mūlaṁ . . . . . uddhaccaṁ mūlaṁ*'

— ibid. 344-5.

"*Papañcas* themselves are *papañcasaṁkhā*: *papañcasaṁkhās* of craving and of views. What is the root of craving-*papañca*? Ignorance is the root, wrong reflection is the root, the conceit 'I am' is the root, lack of shame is the root, lack of fear is the root. restlessness is the root. What is the root of views - *papañca*? Ignorance. . . restlessness is the root."

The two terms are here treated as synonyms. They are, however, not defined with reference to their etymology. Instead we find a definition in extension giving three instances of *papañca*. An attempt to probe into the roots of *papañca* is also evident but it is not sufficiently suggestive of any basic significance that can be attached to *papañca.*

In the *Nettippakaraṇa* we come across a more pronounced attempt to unravel the meaning of the term.

(I) *Papañcā nāma taṇhādiṭṭhimānā tadabhisaṁkhatā ca saṁkhārā.*

— *Netti.* 37.

"*Papañcas* are craving, views and conceit and whatever volitional activities are activated by them."

(II) *Yo cāpi papañco, ye ca saṁkhārā yā ca atītānāgata-paccuppannassa abhinandana, idaṁ ekattaṁ.*

— ibid. 38.

"Whatever is *papañca*, whatever are the volitional activities and whatever is the delighting in past, future and present — all these are the same."

(III) *Papañco nāma vuccati anubandho* - ibid. 38.

"*Papañca* is so called because it is a pursuit."

One seems to get a glimpse of the 'conceptual prolificity' implied by *papañca* in the above three definitions. Firstly, the fact that *papañca* is taken to mean not only craving, conceit and views, but also the volitional activities or mental synergies activated by them, is a notable advance. Secondly, there is the tendency to regard *papañca*, the volitional activities, and the delighting in past, present and future, as synonymous. This last mentioned type of delighting is strongly reminiscent of the *Madhupiṇḍika* formula of sense-perception and is also a tacit recognition of the same prolificity in thought. Thirdly, in calling *papañca* a 'pursuit', yet another hint in the same direction has been given.

According to the *Milindapañha*, King Milinda, too, was keen to get a clear solution to the problem that is engaging our attention now. To this end he questions Nāgasena thus:

Bhante, Nāgasena, bhāsitampetaṁ bhagavatā 'nippapañcārāmā bhikkhave viharatha nippapañcaratino' ti. Katamaṁ taṁ nippapañcanti?

"Venerable Sir Nāgasena, this has been said by the Exalted One: 'Monks, you should dwell delighting in and being delighted by *nippapañca.*' What, Sir, is that *nippapañca*?"

Nāgasena's reply, however, is imprecise and leaves much to be desired. He merely says:

Sotāpattiphalaṁ Mahārāja nippapañcaṁ, sakadāgāmiphalaṁ nippapañcaṁ, anāgāmiphalaṁ nippapañcaṁ, arahattaphalaṁ nippapañcaṁ.

— Milp. 262.

"The Fruit of Stream-winning, O Great King, is *nippapañca*, the Fruit of Once-returning is *nippapañca*, the Fruit of Non-returning is *nippapañca*, the Fruit of Arahantship is *nippapañca*."

Thus the relevance of the *Milindapañha* to the present problem is only its awareness of the problem itself.

Coming down to Buddhaghosa, we find a number of instances where he has commented on *papañca* and *papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*. The following are some of them:

(I) *'Papañcasaññāsaṅkhā' ti, tayo papañcā taṇhāpapañco, mānapapañco diṭṭhipapañco'ti. Tattha aṭṭhasatataṇhā-vicaritaṁ taṇhāpapañco nāma, navavidho māno mānapapañco nāma, dvāsaṭṭhidiṭṭhiyo diṭṭhipapañco nāma. Tesu idha-taṇhāpapañco adhippeto. Kenatthena papañco? Mattapamattākārapāpanaṭṭhena.'*

— D. A. II, 721.

" '*Papañcasaññāsaṅkhā*' means the three *papañca*—the *papañcas* of craving, conceit and views. Therein, the range of the hundred-and-eightfold craving is called '*taṇhā-papañca*'; the ninefold conceit is the '*māna-papañca*'; and the sixty-two views are called '*diṭṭhipapañca*'. Of them '*taṇhāpapañca*' is meant in this context. In which sense is it '*papañca*'? In the sense that it leads to intoxication and delay."

(II) '*Papañcasaññāsaṅkhā'ti ettha saṅkhā'ti koṭṭhāsā: papañcasaññā'ti taṇhādiṭṭhipapañcasampayuttā saññā, saññānāmena vā papañcāyeva vuttā; tasmā papañca-koṭṭhāsāti ayamettha attho.*

— M. A. II. 75

"*Papañcasaññāsaṅkhā*: herein '*saṅkhā*' means 'parts'; '*papañcasaññā*' means perceptions associated with *taṇhā*—and *diṭṭhi-papañca*; or else *papañcas* themselves are meant by the word '*saññā*'; hence 'parts-of-*papañca*' is all that is meant here."

(III) '*Papañco'ti ca mattapamattākārabhāvena pavattānaṁ taṇhādiṭṭhimānānaṁ etaṁ adhivacanaṁ.*

— M. A. 10.

"*Papañca*: this is a synonym for craving, views and conceit which manifest themselves in the form of intoxication and dalliance."

(IV) '*Iñjitāniādīni', yasmā imehi kilesehi sattā iñjanti ceva phandanti ca papañcitā ca honti pamattākārappattā.*

— S. A. III. 73.

"*Iñjitāni* etc. since by these defilements beings are moved, they tremble and are subject to *papañca*, i. e. they become more or less indolent."

(V) '*Papañco'ti taṇhādiṭṭhimānavasena pavatto madanākārasaṇṭhito kilesapapañco.*

— A. A. III. 348.

"*Papañca*: this is the *papañca* with defiling tendencies, which is of an inebriating character, manifesting itself in the form of craving, views and conceit."

Buddhaghosa has rightly recognised the triune nature of *papañca*, but the validity of his definition of *diṭṭhi* is rather doubtful for reasons we have stated earlier. The bringing together of '*papañca*' and '*papañca-saṅkhā*' as synonyms, and the rendering of the word '*saṅkhā*' by '*koṭṭhāsā*' present two other problems which we have already dealt with in fair detail. Apart from these, an important development is evident in the attempt to define '*papañca*' with reference to '*pamatta*' (intoxication or delay) or any of its cognate senses. This particular semantic

development seems to have quite an interesting history behind it. In discussing the primary etymological meaning of '*papañca*' we have observed that the sense of 'diffusion' when applied to the verbal realm conveys such senses as 'verbosity' or 'circumlocution.' These latter have the implicit notion of a delay in stating precisely the relevant fact. It is but a step from this 'delay in speech' to 'delay in action,' and in popular usage '*papañca*' came to be indiscriminately used in both senses, as a result of analogy. The commentarial preference for the same indiscriminate usage need not be seriously called in question, if it does not interfere with the correct interpretation of suttas. But of this we have doubts, for with the identification of '*papañca*' with '*pamāda*', much of the deeper psychological and philosophical significance of the former term tends to get obscured. We have already shown that the philosophical dimension which '*papañca*' assumed in its application to the mental realm was so deep that even the shortest 'code word' (e g. 'I'), which helps to avoid verbal-*papañca*, may turn out to be a mental-*papañca*. If such is the case in regard to the two contiguous realms of thought and speech, one can well imagine the polarity that exists between *papañca* in thought and *papañca* in action. The identification of the 'diffusion in thought' with the 'inertia in action' thus divests *papañca* of its deeper philosophical nuances The peculiar psychological impetus behind this identification is most probably the attraction of the ethically significant term '*pamāda*.' This term was widely used in the qualified sense of 'laxity in the endeavour to attain *Nibbāna*' The occurrences of the term '*papañca*', on the other hand were few and far between, but one feels that this very rarity should have forewarned the commentators. However, as it came to pass, *pamāda*' triumphed - owing to the commentarial predilection for an ethical terminology — and carried away with it the subtler and deeper nuances so vital to the interpretation of the suttas.

The position is much the same, if not worse, in the case of Dhammapāla's commentaries. The word '*papañca*' is now recognised as a legitimate synonym for '*kilesa*' (taints) and it kindles the commentarial imagination in a much lighter vein:

(I) '*Papañcasaṅkhā pahānan'ti, papañcenti yattha sayaṁ uppannā taṁ santānaṁ vitthārenti, ciraṁ ṭhapentī'ti papañcā;*

kilesā, visesato rāga-dosa-moha diṭṭhi-mānā. Tathā hi vuttaṁ rāgapapañco dosapapañco mohapapañco diṭṭhipapañco taṇhā-papañco mānapapañco'ti. Api ca saṁkilesaṭṭho papañcaṭṭho kacavaraṭṭho papañcaṭṭho. Tattha rāgapapañcassa subhasaññā nimittaṁ, dosapapañcassa āghātavatthu, mohapapañcassa āsavā, taṇhāpapañcassa vedanā, diṭṭhipapañcassa saññā mānapapañ-cassa vitakko nimittaṁ Tehi papañcehi sahagatā saññā papañ-casaññā papañcasaññānaṁ saṁkhā bhāgā koṭṭhāsā papañca-saññāsaṅkhā.

— Ud. A. 372

"*Papañcasaṁkhāpahāna*: *papañcas* are so called because they bring about delay, wherever one is born; they lengthen out one's continuum, make one linger long. They are the defilements, particularly lust, hatred, delusion, views and conceit. Hence it has been said: '*rāgapapañco dosapapañco mohapapañco diṭṭhipa-pañco mānapapañco*.' Moreover, '*papañca*' has the sense of defilement of rubbish. Therein, the object of lust is the notion of pleasantness, that of hatred is the occasion for ill will, that of delusion are the cankers, that of craving is feeling, that of views are perceptions, that of conceit is ratiocination. That perception concomitant with those *papañcas* is '*papañcasaññā*'. The number, the divisions, the parts of those *papañcasaññā* are called *papañcasaññāsaṅkhā*' ".

(II) . . . .*sattasantānaṁ saṁsāre papañcenti vitthārentī'ti. papañcā.*

— Thag. A. II. 219.

"*Papañcas* are so called because they lengthen out the mind-continuum of beings in *Saṁsāra*."

(III) . . . .*Papañcā nāma rāgādayo kilesā tesaṁ vūpasama-tāya tadabhāvato ca lokuttarā dhammā nippapañcā nāma.*

— Thag A. III. 70.

"*Papañcas* are the defilements such as lust. The transcen-dental states are called '*nippapañcā*', in the sense that they tend to allay those defilements and are devoid of the same."

A trace of the dynamic sense of '*papañca*' is seen to emerge in the word '*vitthārenti*' ('lengthen out') in Dhammapāla's defini-

tions, but he gives it an ethical twist by connecting it with the idea of lingering long in *Saṁsāra.*

In view of the above developments in commentarial exegesis, it appears that a quest for the original significance of '*papañca*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*' should proceed primarily on the basis of contextual analysis of the suttas. Though the commentaries do throw some light on the subject, they are themselves in the grip of a good deal of semantic development. One has, therefore, to get the suttas to speak for themselves.

III

PRAPAÑCA IN MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM

In Mahāyāna, the term '*prapañca*' preserved much of its deeper philosophical implications, and it had a significant role to play in the Mādhyamika dialectic as well as in the Idealism of the Vijñānavādins. Both systems launched a vigorous attack on all thought constructions and stressed the necessity of the utter allayment of *prapañca (prapañcopasama)*. For the Mādhyamika, the Absolute Truth was above all linguistic relations. Thus in the *Mādhyamika Kārikā*:

Aparapratyayaṁ sāntaṁ - prapañcairaprapañcitaṁ
nirvikalpaṁ anānārtham - etat tatvasya lakṣaṇaṁ
— XVIII. 9.

"Non-relative, quiescent, not to be grasped by concepts, free from thought constructions and plurality — this is the mark of truth."

Prapañcayanti ye buddhaṁ - prapañcātītamavyayaṁ
te prapañcahatāh sarve - na pasyanti tathāgataṁ.
— XXXIII. 15.

"Those who conceptualise the Buddha, who has transcended the range of verbal elaboration and who decays not, none of them will see the Tathāgata, overcome as they are by concepts.'

We have already discussed with special reference to the term '*Suññatā*,' some of the limitations of the Mādhyamika dialectic. Their concept of the dialectical Middle Path, which even made them declare that their position is 'no-position,' ultimately ran into difficulties due to lack of appreciation of the pragmatic approach. As to this latter approach, the Theravādins had it in good measure, even to the extent of ignoring the dialectical significance of the term '*papañca*'. Hence any rapproachement between the two systems on the question of *papañca* will be of mutual benefit, as both will have much to learn and unlearn by comparing notes.

The Vijñānavādins, who posited an *Ālaya Vijñāna* ('store-consciousness') which is intrinsically pure and non-dual, held that it is the thought constructions which obscure and defile its true nature. Hence they also regarded '*prapañca*' as a key-word in their philosophical system. Thus one reads in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*:

Jalpaprapañcābhiratā hi bālās –
tatve na kurvanti matiṁ viśālāṁ
jalpo hi traidhātukadukhahetus –
tatvaṁ hi duhkhasya vināśahetuḥ'

— L. S. (Nanjio) III. 73.

"Given to idle prattle through concepts are the fools, and they do not attain to the great wisdom pertaining to Truth Such prattle, verily, is the origin of suffering in the three realms, and the Truth is the cause of destruction of that suffering."

Evamanāgatodhunāpi dharmatayā nirvikalpāh tathāgatāh, sarvavikalpaprapañcātītāh. . . .

— ibid. p. 19.

"Thus in the future as well as at present, the Tathāgatas are by nature devoid of thought constructions; they are beyond all thought constructions and verbal elaboration."

A reference to a mind intrinsically luminous but defiled by extraneous taints, occurs in the *Anguttara Nikāya* (I. 10). Similarly, the consciousness of the emancipated one is said to be free from conceptual taints. Yet in the Pali Canon there is no suggestion of an absolute mind as the Ultimate Reality as in the case of the Vijñānavāda. Even the *viññāṇa* finally ceases at the death of the emancipated one since it is just one of the five aggregates:

Abhedi kāyo. nirodhi saññā, vedanā sītirahaṁsu sabbā, vūpasamiṁsu saṅkhārā, viññāṇam attham agamā.

— Ud. 93.

"The body broke up, perceptions ceased, all feelings cooled off, volitional activities calmed down and *consciousness came to an end.*"

Moreover, the reference to a mind intrinsically pure is not to be confused with the idea of an absolute entity, like a soul, already embedded in every being. The luminosity of the mind is a *potentiality* which becomes a reality only when the necessary conditions are fulfilled. These conditions are collectively called '*bhāvanā*', a word which even literally suggests growth. It is significant that the Anguttara passage referred to above is in point of fact an exhortation stressing the importance of *bhāvanā* (development of mind). Thus, according to the *Pāli Nikāyas*, one has to *grow* into the luminosity of the mind. It is not something pre-existing in some metaphysical sense, ready to be peeled off by dialectical or other means. The lotus cannot be traced metaphysically to the seed or the plant. It has to blossom forth in order to be a lotus.

Yet another innovation of the Vijñānavādins was the thoroughgoing idealism established with the help of a hierarchy of eight *vijñānas*. Here again we have an extreme. Apart from the ideas of the conditionality of phenomena, of the limitations of the sensory apparatus and of language and logic, in early Buddhism one does not find evidence of a 'store-consciousness' projecting all material and mental phenomena.

The peculiar expressions '*papañca-saṅkhā*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*', which we have come across in the Pāli Canon, seem to be conspicuous by their absence in Mahāyāna texts. It may be that the term '*prapañca*' itself came to be looked upon as being capable of conveying all its verbal and nominal senses. However, in the Pāli Canon we noted some basis for a distinction between '*papañca*' on the one hand and '*papañca-saṅkhā*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*' on the other. While '*papañca*' in a dynamic sense was used to denote the triple proliferating tendency of the mind, '*papañca-saṅkhā*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṁkhā*' signified the apparently static concepts tinged with or characterised by that particular tendency. As such, in the case of '*papañca*' the accent was more on the deep-seated psychological tendency centring on the ego-notion, rather than on

its external counterpart, the concept or linguistic convention. By eradicating *papañca* at its very source, the sage puts an end to *papañca-saṅkhā* or *papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*, but he is at liberty to use worldly concepts (*lokasamaññā*, *lokaniruttiyo*, *lokavohārā*, *lokapaññattiyo*) without any fear of being overwhelmed by them. Hence, the true struggle was fought within, rather than in debate. It is doubtful whether all the good sense behind this peculiar usage of terms could be sufficiently conveyed by the single term '*prapañca*.'

IV

PRAPAÑCA IN THE VEDĀNTA

The exact chronological relation that obtains between the concept of *papañca* in the Pāli Nikāyas and that of *prapañca* in the Vedānta, is a matter for speculation. This is because of the fact that this concept is unknown to the major *Upanisads* such as the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya*. which are generally recognised as pre-Buddhistic It finds mention in such later *Upaniṣads* as the *Māṇḍukya* and the *Svetāsvatara*. In fact, the passage in the *Māṇḍukya* which contains a reference to '*prapañca*' is a conscious elaboration of doctrines already adumbrated in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. Though as such the chronological relation is not sufficiently clear. there are some traces of parallelism between the Vedāntic and the early Buddhist conceptions of *prapañca*.

The *Māṇḍukya Upanisad*,[1] devoted solely to the discussion of the mystic significance of the syllable '*Om*'. describes in detail the four 'fourths' of the self. The first three states of the self are the 'waking state' (*jāgaritasthāna*), the 'dreaming-state' (*svapnasthāna*), and the 'deep-sleep state' (*suṣuptasthāna*), corresponding to the three phonetic elements (*mātrā*), ' a ','u' and 'm', which make up the syllable '*Om*'. The fourth state of the self is without an element, and it is said that with it there can be no dealing (*avyavahāryah*), that it is the cessation of development (*prapañcopasamah*). benign (*sivah*) and without a second (*advaitah*) Thus the first three states are collectively regarded as *prapañca*. These three are defined firstly with reference to the 'fourths'

Jāgaritasthāno bahisprajñah saptāṅga ekonaviṁsati mukhah sthūlabhugvaisvānarah prathamah pādah.

— III

"The first quarter is *Vaisvānara*, whose sphere of activity is the waking state, who is conscious of external objects, who has

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[1] Tr. - Swāmi Nikhilānanda.

seven limbs and nineteen mouths and whose experience consists of gross material objects."

Svapnasthāno' ntahprajñah saptāngah ekonavimsatimukhah praviviktabhuktaijaso dvitīyah pādah.

— IV

"The second quarter is the *Taijasa*, whose sphere (of activity) is the dream, who is conscious of internal objects, who has seven limbs and nineteen mouths and who experiences the subtle objects."

Yatra supto na kamcana kāmam kāmayate, na kamcana svapnam pasyati tatsuṣuptam, suṣuptasthāna ekībhūtah prajñānaghana evā 'nandamayo hyānandabhuk cetomukham prājñāstrtīyah pādah.

— V

"That is the deep-sleep state wherein the sleeper does not desire any objects nor does he see any dream. The third quarter is the *Prājña*, whose sphere is deep sleep, in whom all (experiences) become unified or undifferentiated, who is verily a mass of consciousness entire, who is full of bliss and who experiences bliss, and who is the path leading to the knowledge (of the two other states)."

The same three states are now defined with reference to the three phonetic elements:

Jāgaritasthāno vaisvānaro 'kārah prathamā mātrā' āpterādimatvādāpnoti ha vai sarvānkāmānādisca bhavati ya evam veda.

— IX

"He who is *Vaisvānara*, having for its sphere of activity the waking state, is 'A', the first letter (of Aum) on account of its all pervasiveness or on account of being the first (these being the common feature of both). One who knows this attains to the fulfilment of all desires and becomes the first (of all)."

Svapnasthānastaijasa ukāro dvitīyā mātrotkrṣādubhayatvādvotkarsati ha vai jñānasamtati samānasca bhavati nāsyābrahmavitkule bhavati ya evam veda.

"*Taijasa*, whose sphere of activity is the dream state, is 'U', the second letter (of Aum) on account of superiority or on account of being in between the two. He who knows this attains to a superior knowledge, is treated equally by all alike and finds no one in his line who is not a knower of Brahman."

Suṣuptasthānah prājño makārastrtīyā mātrā miterapīter vā minoti ha vā idaṁ sarvamapītisca bhavati ya evaṁ veda.

— XI

"*Prājña*, whose sphere is deep sleep, is 'M', the third letter of Aum, because it is both the measure and that wherein all become one. One who knows this (identity of *Prājña* and M) is able to measure all (realise the real nature of the world) and also comprehends all within himself."

The phonetic symbolism of the first three states seems to strike a familiar note. The letter 'a' representing the waking-state is associated with the attainment (*āpti*) of all desires and becoming first of all (*ādimatva.*). This reminds us of the *taṇhā* aspect of *papañca* in early Buddhism.

The sleeping-state, with which the letter 'u' is identified, is connected with superiority or exaltation (*utkarṣa*) and intermediateness (*ubhayatva*). He who knows this is said to be capable of attaining to a superior knowledge and of becoming equal (*samāna*). This state seems to have some relation to the *māna* aspect of *papañca*.

The deep-sleep state symbolised by 'm' is associated with the idea of measuring or erecting the world (*miti)* and immerging init (*apīti*). This smacks of the *diṭṭhi* aspect of *papañca*.

It must be admitted that this interpretation is highly conjectural and that the three states are explained differently in the orthodox Vedāntic circles. Nevertheless, it appears that the parallelism is too marked to be ignored. The definition of the fourth state, however, has already attracted the attention of Dr. Saratchandra, because of its similarity to vs. 874 of the *Sutta Nipāta*. He quotes it without much comment in his discussion

of the problem of *papañca*.[1] We may now compare the relevant *Upaniṣadic* passage and the verse in question in some detail.

Nāntahprajñaṁ na bahisprajñaṁ nobhayatahprajñaṁ na prajñaṁ nāprajñaṁ. Adrṣtamavahāryavahāryamalakṣaṇamacintyamavyapadesyamekātmapratyayasāram prapañcopasamaṁ sāntaṁ sivam-advaitaṁ caturthaṁ manyate sa ātmā sa vijñeyah.
— VII

"*Turīya* is not that which is conscious of the internal (subjective) world, nor that which is conscious of the external (objective) world, nor that which is conscious of both, nor that which is a mass of all sentiency, nor that which is simple consciousness, nor that which is insentient. (It is) unseen (by any sense-organ), not related to anything, incomprehensible (by the mind), uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable, essentially of the nature of consciousness constituting the self alone, negation of all phenomena, the Peaceful, all Bliss and the non-dual. This is what is known as the fourth (*Turīya*). This is the *Ātman* and it has to be realised."

Na saññasaññī na visaññasaññī
no pi asaññī na vibhūtasaññī
evaṁ sametassa vibhoti rūpaṁ
saññānidānā hi papañcasaṁkhā.

— Sn. 874.

"Neither a person with normal consciousness nor one who has an abnormal consciousness, nor one who is in a non-conscious state, nor one who has put an end to consciousness – 'form' ceases to function for one who is thus constituted; for concepts characterised by prolificity have perception as their source."

From a study of the context in which the above verse of the *Kalaha-vivāda Sutta* is found, it would seem that the verse gives the final solution to the problem posed in the first verse of that sutta: "Whence do spring up contentions and disputes, lamentation and sorrow together with envy; and arrogance and conceit together with slander; whence do these spring up? Pray tell me this" (Sn. 862). The ultimate source of this outer and inner

[1] *Buddhist Psychology of Perception*, p. 9, n. 19.

conflict is gradually laid bare as the sutta unfolds itself in the form of a dialogue. The links in this causal-chain are the following:

I. *Kalaha-vivāda* (contentions and disputes), *parideva-soka* (lamentation and sorrow), *macchara* (envy), *mānāti-māna* (arrogance and conceit), *pesuṇa* (slander).

II. *Piyā* (things considered dear), *āsā-niṭṭhā* (expectations and fulfilments).

III. *Chanda* (desire), *vinicchayā* (judgements), *kodha* (anger), *mosavajja* (falsehood), *kathaṁkathā* (doubt).

IV. *Sātaṁ-asātaṁ* (pleasant and unpleasant), *vibhava-bhava* (non-existence and existence).

V. *Phassa* (Sense-impression), *pariggahā* (graspings), *mamatta* (egotism).

VI. *Nāma-rūpa* (name-and-form), *icchā* (wish), *sukha-dukkha* (ease and discomfort).[1]

Although the verse in question purports to give the final solution to the initial problem stated in vs. 892, it is — more specifically—the reply to the following question in vs 873: "To him who is endowed in which manner does 'form' *(rūpa)* cease to function (*vibhoti*), as well as the notions of ease and discomfort? Tell me how this ceases to function. 'Let us know it' — such was my desire."

Now, the state in which 'form' ceases to function is presented in vs. 874 as a bewildering paradox. While in it, one is neither in his normal consciousness nor is he unconscious. He is not non-conscious nor has he put an end to consciousness. This cryptic formulation takes us back to the subject of *Aññā-phala samādhi* discussed earlier in this work. Since the *anidassana-viññāṇa* of the arahant does not 'illustrate' name-and-form, the concept of 'form' can no longer function and therewith sense

[1] The chain of causes is rather ramified. Main links are therefore underlined.

impressions too cease.[1] How this *anidassana-viññāṇa* serves as a refuge or an island for the arahant, amidst the gushing current of sense impressions, has already been discussed. Only the dictum in the last line of the verse (*saññānidānā hi papañca-saṅkhā*—"for concepts characterised by prolificity have perception as their source") needs special mention as it epitomizes the whole problem.

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[1] According to the commentaries (*Mahā Niddesa* and *Paramatthajotikā*), vs. 874 contains an allusion to "one who is *on the path to* the formless realms" (*arūpamaggasamaṅgī* - Nid. I. 280). In explaining the four negatives in the verse, the *Niddesa* has already disallowed any possibility that the allusion is to the *attainment* of the formless absorptions ('. . . .*vibhūtasaññino vuccanti catunnaṁ arūpasamāpattīnaṁ lābhino; na pi so catunnaṁ arūpasamāpattīnaṁ lābhī*'). The possibility that this could be a reference to the *Nirodha Samāpatti* (attainment of cessation) is also rejected in its comment on the words '*no pi asaññī*'. Hence the only way out of the *impasse*, was seen to lie in the identification of the cryptic formula with some vague *intermediate* state of 'directing the mind towards' (*cittaṁ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti*) some formless attainment. The assumption that the verse alludes, at least tacitly, to some formless (*arūpa*) attainment, is probably due to a wrong emphasis on the words '*vibhoti rūpaṁ*' (Cf. Sn. vv. 1113, 1121). As the *Niddesa* itself mentions (p. 277), the transcending of form in the formless realm is but one of four possible forms of transcending. It is, therefore, very likely that the transcendence meant in the present context is the more radical one pertaining to the Arahant's *Aññā - phalasamādhi*. The following are some more clues for unravelling further evidence on this point.

I. *Yattha nāmañca rūpañca-asesaṁ uparujjhati*
paṭighaṁ rūpasaññā ca - ettha sā chijjate jaṭā
— S. N. I. 13.

"Wherein name-and-form; sense-reaction and the *concept of form* are totally cut off, there it is that the tangle is snapped off."

II. *Yassa vitakkā vidhūpitā - ajjhattaṁ suvikappitā asesā*
taṁ saṅgaṁ aticca arūpasaññī - catuyogātigo na jātim eti.
— Ud. 71.

In the next verse, the interlocutor confesses that his questions have been answered, but he proceeds to get the solution to yet another problem:

> *Yan taṁ apucchimha akittayī no*
> *aññaṁ taṁ pucchāma tad iṁgha brūhi*
> *ettāvataggaṁ nu vadanti h'eke*
> *yakkhassa*[1] *suddhiṁ idha paṇḍitāse*
> *udāhu aññampi vadanti etto.*
>
> — Sn. 875.

"Whatever we have asked you, you have explained it to us. We wish to ask you yet another; verily answer us that. Do some who are reckoned as wise men here declare the highest purity of the soul with this alone, or else do they state anything beyond this?"

Here the intention is probably to ascertain whether that particular state referred to in the previous verse is the highest purity of the individual soul. The interlocutor, although he grants that his problem of 'universal conflict' has now been solved, is apparently not satisfied until he gets it restated in terms of the soul theory.[2] In the last two verses of the sutta that follow, it is shown that his standpoint is at fault.

"In whom the thoughts fabricated within have been totally burnt out, having surpassed that bond, he is one who is *not conscious of form* (sic! *not*, as usual, 'conscious-of-the-formless', *i.e. 'a-rūpa-saññī'*; not *'arūpa-saññī')*. He has transcended the four yokes and does not come back to birth."

[1] "Exceptionally the term *'yakkha'* is used as a *philosophical* term denoting the 'individual soul'." - P. T. S. Dict. *'Yakkha'* 7.

[2] A similar situation arises in the *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta* (D. N. I. 185 ff.) when Poṭṭhapāda tries to understand the Buddha's discourse on the cessation of perceptions in terms of a soul. His attempt met with a mild rebuff from the Buddha, but he gets a more trenchant one from Buddhaghosa in the form of the simile of the pig. (D. A.)

Ettāvataggampi vadanti h'eke
yakkhassa suddhiṁ idha paṇḍitāse
tesaṁ puneke samayaṁ vadanti
anupādisese kusalā vadānā

— Sn. 866.

"Some who are considered wise men (*paṇḍitāse*) here call this itself the highest purity of the individual soul, but there are again some of them who, claiming to be experts in the cessation without substrata, speak of an annihilation."

Ete ca ñatvā upanissitāti
ñatvā munī nissaye so vimaṁsī
ñatvā vimutto na vivādameti
bhavābhavāya na sameti dhīro.

— Sn. 877.

"Knowing that they are dependent on speculative views, the sage who has discriminative knowledge of those views, being completely emancipated through knowledge, does not enter into dispute. The truly wise man (*dhīro*) does not fall back on any type of existence."

While some 'wise men' identify the afore-mentioned paradoxical state as the highest purity of the soul, yet others of the same category speak of it in terms of annihilation. Both these viewpoints are the outcome of speculative views based on the illusion of the ego. Hence the sage, well knowing their futility, does not posit any form of existence, since he has realised the cessation of all existence — the *Nibbāna* (*bhavanirodho nibbānaṁ*).

The term 'wise men' (*paṇḍitā*) seems to have been used here in an ironical sense, judging by the tone of the vs. 876. These two schools of 'wise men' who were disputing over the two sides of the same shield — the ego — were in eternal conflict between the two alternatives, 'to be or not to be'. Now, out of these two, the former had its strongest representative in the *Upaniṣadic* tradition We have tried to show that there are traces of a parallelism between the phonetic symbolism of the first three states of the self in the *Māṇḍukya* and the definition of *papañca* in Buddhism. If this is plausible, it may further be conjectured that in the 'fourth-state' (*Turīya*) — which not only partakes of

a paradoxical character like the *Aññā-phala*, but also has a specific reference to the allayment of *papañca* (*prapañcopasama*) — we have another version of the Buddha's teaching on *papañca*. It is clear from the *Māṇḍukya* passage that the term '*prapañcopasama*' has been deployed to qualify the fourth state of *the self* which is said to be non-dual. Thus the ontological presuppositions concerning the reality of a self are reasserted here with the help of the above term. This could well be an attempt to graft the Buddhist teachings on *papañca* into the *Upaniṣadic* system, preserving intact, at the same time, the iron-framework of the soul theory.[1] This reminds us of the first school of 'wise men' referred to in vs. 875, for whom the paradoxical *Aññāphala samādhi* was 'the highest purity of *the self*.'

The *Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad*[2] uses the term '*prapañca*' to denote the phenomenal world of manifoldness, and it looks upon the world as an emanation from the One God, Creator.

Sa vrkṣakālākrtibhih paronyo
- yasmāt prapañcah parivartate 'yaṁ
dharmāvahaṁ pāpanudaṁ bhagesaṁ
- ñatvātmasthaṁ amrtaṁ visvadhāma.

— VI. 6.

"Higher and other than the world-tree, time and forms,
Is He from whom this expanse proceeds,
The bringer of right, the remover of evil, the lord of prosperity,
Know Him as in one's own self the immortal abode of all."

Yastantunābha iva tantubhih pradhānajaih
svabhāvatah deva ekah svamāvrṇoti sa no dadhād
brahmāpyayam.

— VI. 10

"The One God who according to his own nature, covers himself like a spider with threads produced from unmanifested matter, may He grant us entrance into Brahman."

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[1] *Sarvaṁ hyetadbrahmāyamātmā brahma soyamātmā catuṣpāt.*- (*Māṇḍ* II). "All this is verily Brahman. This *ātman* is Brahman. This *ātman* has four quarters."

[2] Tr. by R. E. Hume.

Eko vaśī niṣkriyāṇām bahūnām
ekaṁ bījaṁ bahudhā yaḥ karoti
tamātmasthaṁ ye'nupaśyanti dhīrās
– teṣāṁ sukhaṁ śāsvataṁ netareṣāṁ

— VI. 12.

"The one controller of the inactive many
who makes the *One* seed *manifold*.
The wise who perceive Him as standing in one's self—
They and no others have eternal happiness."

The sense of manifoldness conveyed by '*prapañca*' here has more than an epistemological significance. It presupposes a creator who brings into existence this world of manifoldness out of his 'unmanifested matter' (*pradhāna*), even as the spider covers itself with threads produced out of its own organic matter. The process of creation is thus conceived as a real emanation from God, who is the One Controller behind the world of multiplicity. The one seed he makes manifold.

It must be said that this pantheistic conception of *prapañca* has nothing corresponding to it in the Pāli Canon. There, as we saw, the manifoldness of the world does not presuppose a One which is real as the source of emanation. If anything, it is the *illusion* of the ego comprising the three dynamic multipliers, that works in collaboration with the imperfect sense-faculties to give us the impression of a real world of multiplicity. The sum-total of this activity is made available to us through concepts — hence the terms '*papañcasaṅkhā*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*'. However, when seen in the light of *paññā*, the world is neither a Unity (*ekatta*) nor a Plurality (*nānatta*). All these conceptual distinctions disappear with the cessation of *papañca*.

V

MODERN SCHOLARS ON PAPAÑCA AND PAPAÑCA-SAÑÑĀ-SAṄKHĀ

There is hardly any consensus of opinion among modern scholars as to the correct rendering and the exact significance of '*papañca*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*', as they occur in the Pāli Canon. Thus the P. T. S. Dictionary begins its comment on '*papañca*' with an air of uncertainty:

"In its Pāli meaning, uncertain whether identical with Sanskrit *prapañca* (*pra* + *pañca* – to spread out; meaning 'expansion, diffuseness, manifoldness'); more likely as suggested by etymology and meaning of Lat. 'im-ped-iment-um,' connected with *pada*, thus perhaps originally 'pa-pad-ya', i. e. what is in front of (i. e. in the way of) the feet (as an obstacle):

1. obstacle, impediment, a burden which causes delay, hindrance, delay, . . .

2. illusion, obsession, hindrance to spiritual progress. . . .

3. diffuseness, copiousness.
   papañca-saṅkhā – sign or characteristic of obsession.
   papañca-saññā (*saṅkhā*) – idea of obsession, *idee-fixe*, illusion."

It must have been the difficulty to relate the meaning of Skt. '*prapañca*' with the exegesis found in the Pali commentaries, that prompted the lexicographers to suggest a new etymology '*pa-pad-ya*.' But this suggested etymology seems to be a little far-fetched. If its purpose is merely to explain away such accepted meanings as 'obstacle, impediment, delay or hindrance,' then it is not even necessary, for as we have pointed out these are the secondary meanings of '*papañca* in speech', which assume a primary significance in the case of '*papañca* in action'. We have already shown how the commentators, due to their predilection for the ethically significant word '*pamāda*', analogically appropriated '*papañca*' also into the realm of action. The

Dictionary explains '*papañca–saññā-saṅkhā*' as the sign or characteristic of obsession. The connection between '*saṅkhā*' and concepts appears to have been overlooked.

In the *Buddhist Dictionary*, Ven. Nyanātiloka Mahāthera suggests the following meanings for '*papañca*': "Expansion, diffuseness, detailed exposition, development, manifoldness, multiplicity (world), differentiation, appendant." He further draws attention to the *Madhupiṇḍika* formula of sense perception, a portion of which he quotes and translates:

"... '*yaṁ vitakketi taṁ papañceti, yaṁ papañceti tato-nidānam purisaṁ papañcasaññāsaṅkhā samudācaranti*', which I venture to translate thus: 'whatever he differentiates, by reason thereof, ideas and considerations of differentiation (*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*) arise in him'."

It may be said that in rendering '*papañca*' by 'differentiaion,' the proliferating tendency of concepts has been suggested. The meaning of '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*' as given here is also nearer the one we have suggested, though the verb '*samudācaranti*' is here taken in the sense of an 'arising' whereas we rendered it so as to mean an 'overwhelming.'

K. E Neumann in his German translations, renders '*papañca*' with either *Vielheit* (plurality) or *Sonderheit* (diversity). This rendering has the disadvantage of being associated with its logical and ontological postulate of a Unity or Oneness. It may harmonise with the Vedāntic thought but not with early Buddhism.

T. W and Mrs. Rhys Davids, in their translation of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (*Dialogues of the Buddha*, II, S. B. B III p. 312 fn) suggest '*idee-fixe*' as an equivalent for '*papañca-saññā*.' They stress the ethical connotations attached to the term by Buddhaghosa who explained it with the phrase '*mattapamattākārapāpana*.' The translators add the following comment also regarding the importance of the term.

"This is one of the most recurrent conceptions of the higher Buddhism, the system of the Aryan Path, and is one of the many ways in which the early Buddhists struggled to give more precise and ethical an implication to the Indian conception of

Avijjā. It is also one of the technical terms most frequently misunderstood......"

Mrs. Rhys Davids uses the word 'obsession' in her *Psalms of the Early Buddhists* (p. 343) as the equivalent for what she calls 'the difficult word. *papañca*'. She contends Dr. Neumann's rendering on the grounds that the opposite of *ekatta* (oneness) is *nānatta* (plurality) and not *papañca*. This can be taken as a useful hint in the search for the original meaning of *papañca*.

Miss I. B. Horner takes '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*' in the sense of 'a number of obsession and perceptions'. The validity of this bifurcation of '*papañca-saññā*' is rather doubtful. It is interesting to note how she has chosen the word 'number' as an equivalent for '*saṅkhā*,' bypassing its alternative meaning 'concept,' which we preferred.

Venerable Ñāṇamoli Thera has the following comment to make on '*papañca*' in *The Path of Purification* (p. 578, fn. 17; see also, *The Guide*, p. 60, fn. 203–2):

"...The sense in which the word is used in the suttas is that of diversifying and is best exemplified at M. I, 111: 'Friends, due to eye and to a visible object eye-consciousness arises. The coincidence of the three is contact. With contact as condition there is feeling. What a man feels that he perceives. What he perceives, he thinks about. What he think about, he diversifies (*papañceti*). Owing to his having diversified, the evaluation of diversifying perceptions besets a man with respect to past, future and present visible objects' and so on This kind of '*papañca*' is explained by the commentaries as 'due to craving pride, and views' (M. A. I. 25, II. 10; 75 etc.), and it may be taken as the diversifying action, the choosing and rejecting, the approval and disapproval (M. I. 65) exercised by craving etc. on the bare material supplied by perception and thought..."

Here the true significance of the *Madhupiṇḍika* formula emerges to a great extent. The element of diversification no doubt contributes to the conceptual prolificity that is *papañca*. '*Papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*', for which he suggests the expression 'the *evaluation* of diversifying perceptions,' takes the plural

number in this context, and hence it would be more appropriate to take '*saṅkhā*' to mean 'reckonings' or 'concepts'.

E. M. Hare, while translating the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (*Gradual Sayings* IV. 155 fn. 4), observes: "*Papañca* is literally diffuseness, illusion, perhaps mystery-mongering." In that particular context he renders '*papañca*' by 'diffuseness' and '*nippapañca*' by 'exactness' or 'precision.' But he is probably referring to the verbal realm rather than to the mental. However, in translating the *Sutta Nipāta*, Hare has preferred the word 'hindrance' (*Woven Cadences of Early Buddhists*, pp. 2, 129). He has rendered the phrase '*saññānidānā hi papañcasaṅkhā*', which occurs in the *Kalahavivāda Sutta*, as follows: "Reckoned a hindrance is the perception's source" (p. 129). The phrase has been construed here in reverse order, giving prominence to the words '*saññānidānā*.' Nevertheless, it appears that he has caught a glimpse of the meaning of '*saṅkhā*' as a 'reckoning' or a 'calling.'

G. C. Pande, in his *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism* (pp. 474 fn), draws attention to the connection of '*papañca*' with its counterpart in Buddhist Sanskrit and Vedāntic sources. Having taken account of such references as '*sabbaṁ accagamā imaṁ papañcaṁ*' (Sn. 8) and '*anuvicca papañcanāmarūpaṁ*' (Sn. 530), he arrives at the following conclusion: "*Papañca* is thus equivalent to *nāmarūpa*, to end which is to reach the highest attainment."

We have seen how the above two references, as well as many others in the Pāli Canon, lend themselves to a better interpretation when *papañca* is given a more dynamic content such as 'prolific conceptualisation.' To equate it to '*nāmarūpa*', on the strength of its implications in other systems of thought, would be to obscure an important segment of the philosophy of early Buddhism.

E. R. Sarathchandra, in his search for the original meaning of '*papañca*' (*Buddhist Psychology of Perception*, pp. 4 ff), is guided to some extent by the significance of the term in the Vedānta and he also interprets '*papañca*' in terms of '*nāmarūpa*.' He has tried to establish this meaning notwithstanding the

tautology that results from its application to the verse beginning with '*anuvicca papañca-nāmarūpaṁ*'. However, he has discussed at some length the relevance of '*papañca*' to the process of sense-perception and its essentially philosophical import. The fact that the identification of oneself with the thinking consciousness gives rise to *papañca-saṅkhā* has been recognised. Yet he renders '*papañca saṅkhā*' as 'the obsession (*saṅkhā*) known as *papañca*.' He seems to have had in mind some hybrid form between '*saṅkā*' (*Skt. shaṅkā*) and '*kaṅkhā*' (*Skt. kaṅkshā*) — both meaning 'uncertainty' or 'doubt' — when he inadvertently took '*saṅkhā*' to mean 'obsession.'

These are but a handful of the numerous interpretations advanced by modern scholars. We have neither the intention nor the capacity to be exhaustive in this connection. Yet this cross-section of conflicting views would suffice to prove that there s a shroud of uncertainty over the significance of '*papañca*' and '*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*'. Hence it is hoped that our attempt will stimulate a deeper and more comprehensive study of the subject than what we have been able to present through these pages.

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E

* Canonical similes in dark type.

T

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In this book the author, a contemplative Buddhist monk, draws from his broad knowledge of the Buddha's teachings to shed new light on a perennial problem of philosophy, indicated by the book's title. This work focuses upon two important but controversial terms found in the Buddha's discourses-*papañca* and *papañcasaññā-sankhā*. The author sees these terms as referring to the mind's conceptual proliferation, its tendency to create a screen of concepts by which it misinterprets the basic data of experience. He shows the characteristic Buddhist teaching of "non-self" to have new dimensions of significance, not only in the context of Buddhism but also in relation to philosophy, psychology, and ethics. Copious quotations from the Buddhist texts provide increased knowledge and new interpretations of obscure passages. This book will serve as a stimulating source of insights into the deep meaning of the Dhamma.

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